

EFFORT FANZINE

#2 THE FIRST STEP JUSTICE MINDSET



TAKE A STAND

EFFORT FANZINE #2

INTRO

So, a second issue did happen, and I am honestly more stoked about this issue than the first, and I guess you're about to find out if you are as well. The reactions we received when the first issue was released was overwhelming. Never in our wildest dreams did we expect such positive feedback. It seems like people are still into printed zines.

This issue of Effort Fanzine was assembled in about as long time as the first one, which means not that much time at all - just full speed ahead. Let us know if you like it, hate it or just send us random emails about how much you love Youth of Today.

Ulf

While doing #1 I never thought that now, 6 months later, #2 would be done. I figured that it was a one-issue-zine but the love for it kept us going. We pretty much put every 'new' band we're into in #1 so we didn't even know how to pursue with a follow up. But the response we got was, like Ulf put it; overwhelming. People that we've looked up to for years, playing in bands that we love were all of the sudden saying how much they liked our zine. Crazy. It left us with enough motivation to make a new issue.

I'd like to take this moment to say thank you to all the bands that's been featured in Effort. All of you have had an impact on our lives. With that said, the two bands that has had more impact on us, not just through their music but also through who they are; The First Step and Justice. It's a true honour to have all these great people caring enough about our questions. Thank you! Just as I thought #2 would never see the light of day, I doubt #3 will. But with this pace, who knows? Hope you enjoy reading this zine as much as we enjoyed making it.

Kalle

COVER PHOTO

Of IN MY EYES taken by Robbie Redcheeks. Why another band from the '-97' era you might ask? Well, to us that era of hardcore means a lot and this picture contains pretty much everything you could ask for in a hardcore photo. It has that feeling that time stands still yet you can completely feel the energy that went down there that night. It has one guy running the stage, the perfect stage dive run. Except he's holding his guitar. The others on stage are just screaming out what we can only assume be the lyrics of "Lasting values" or any other classic IME tune. Oh, and it also features a Hands Tied shirt. Enough said.

CONTACT

theefforttolive@gmail.com
c/o Garmark
Pontonjägatan 4
112 22 Stockholm
Sweden





Effort celebrating the first official Chain Day.
Prague 2008.

KALLES PLAYLIST FOR THE ISSUE

- Shelter
- Propagandhi
- Supertouch
- Glasvegas
- Jeru The Damaja
- Common Cause

UFFES PLAYLIST FOR THE ISSUE

- Token Entry
- The Cardigans
- Right Idea
- Rival Schools
- J5
- Dag Nasty

THANK YOU!

Seriously, from the bottom of our hearts we'd like to thank everyone who helped us out, whether it was through inspiration, guidance, pointing us in the right direction or just through encouraging words. In no particular order; Tim McMahon, Anthony Pappalardo, Aram, Robbie Redcheeks, David Sine, Louise, Everyone in Mindset, Filip and Stief Justice, Geert Powered Records, Voytek and City To City Records, Ian and Dead & Gone Records, ON, Marcus and all the amazing guys in Anchor, Erik Anarchy, Daniel Frankowski, Dylan Press, Andy Norton and Even Skaar. Stephen St. Germain (and EVERYONE! in TFS) - thank you for everything.

PHOTOS

By David Sine, Robbie Redcheeks, Daniel Frankowski, Dylan Press, Even Skaar, Katie Dance and Brian Froustet.
The YOT pics (this and the previous) by unknown.
If you took it: We're really, really sorry.



INSTED

PHOTO: DAVID SINE

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CAN'T JUST SIT BACK, IT'S TIME TO REACT!

So, what’s left to say about Justice? If I was to describe this band with one word, it would be “inspirational”. Because Justice really made an impact on me. Everything from the demo that was pure raging hardcore that just screamed out excitement about the core, being in a band and giving it your everything - to the last record, Live and Learn, that still had that same passion but also pictured a band that had grown, evolved and in every way followed their own way through the journey that Justice took them on. When my band Balance started we decided early on to give it our everything- “like Justice did” we said. I guess that about sums it up. The “Justice mentality” inspired me through their constant hard work and through proving that just because it’s DIY, doesn’t mean it has to be poorly done - rather the opposite (You’re only young once... so do it right!) I am beyond way stoked that I was able to catch them live a bunch of times, chat with them at the shows and finally have them in this fanzine. I hope this contributes to a nice closure to a band that, for me, embodies everything hardcore is about. Ulf.

Photos by Geert Hollanders or sent to us from Filip and Stief.
Art by Spoiler. Who else right?

2...3...



JUSTICE

Who had the idea to start Justice in the first place?

F: That had to be me and Spoiler... me and Dunk were already in a band but that didn't work out at all. So us 3 started jamming(me on drums, spoiler on bass, dunk on guitar). We wrote a couple of songs and started thinking about a singer. Nobody was really interested cuz we were idiots I guess. My drumming sucked too so we decided that I'd rock the mike and this kid called Stief would drum. He never played drums in a band really but we felt that this guy looked eye to eye with us on a lot of things, he said that he could do it so... maybe we were desperate. A couple of weeks later though stief was way better then me and we had enough songs to record a demo.

Was it a certain event/show/moment that sparked the idea of starting the band?

F: The thing was that there wasn't any moment that could spark, that could inspire kids into doing something constructive. There was nothing happening... but we still loved it. We had bands like Dead Stop and The Deal(pre- Rise And Fall) but there were only a couple kids going off (me, stief, spoiler, larry edge, flex, kinet, hingie and the deal and dead stop dudes... that was IT). Me and Stief went to posi fest... and our jaws dropped to the floor, that's where us 2 saw the light. People were going nuts, stagedivin, skankin, mashin... my stomach turned, it gave me the chills for 4 days straight. A couple of the kids who were hitting the pit or doing flips of speakers became my best friends years later(what's up Hoodrack!). We also loved watching old hardcore videos... it helped us create an idea of what hardcore could be like. Me and Stief started writing lyrics on the flight back... we were ready to go.

Who were the local heroes for you guys to begin with?

F: Dead Stop and The Deal. I loved Reaching Forward. We were also in awe of dudes like Geert Hollanders and Hans Liar.

S: I guess Building had a big influence on all of us and also The deal (later became rise and fall), because they saw hardcore they way we saw it (they liked YOT). And then of course dead stop who were starting out at that time.

What was the initial plan, like "we're gonna do this band influenced by..." , what were your first influences, bandwise?

F: We literally said we wanted to sound like Confront and Youth Of Today. But we never got close to that, the songs we wrote were Justice songs, hardcore songs with our own twist/idea. How we thought hardcore should sound like. But we were young and we still had a long way to go. We still had to find

out about a lot of past hardcore bands, music in general and we had to get better playing our instruments. We were a subject to change. **How long did you spend rehearsing before you did a show/recording? A month, six months, a year?**

F: We rehearsed a lot, maybe even every day. Spoiler had to housesit this huge mansion of a bunch of old people. "The Justice Villa". We hung out there every day. I think we rehearsed for a couple of months. We weren't ready for our first show but we were so hyped up, we wanted to play so bad. Maybe we were too hyped up to be honest cuz we were too nervous, I blanked out a couple of times, didn't know what to say. I had to write down what I wanted to get off my chest in between songs. I puked before and after the set. But we did it. We wanted to do this band.

S: I think it was about half a year, we started practising in March 2003 I think and then spoiler went away to Canada for the summer and then we really started getting ready after that and we played our first show on 17-10-03. We just wanted to get out there as soon as possible, even tough we knew we weren't really ready for it. **Please tell us how you ended up going on a US tour having only released a demo. For how long were you on that tour? Was this "all in"-approach towards touring, and the band in general, something you aimed for from the beginning?**

F: We toured the US a couple of days after our 7" release show. Greg Mental, AJ and Dan Edge hooked us up. They saw a youtube video of us playing Light The Fuse Fest in Holland which was a couple weeks after we released our demo tape. Kids were going crazy and our numbers grew... 10 kids became 75 kids going crazy. All for a bunch of idiots, I still see spoiler looking at me with a look in his eyes that was super angry but it also said WHAT THE FUCK IS HAPPENING HERE! Anyway... they loved it and got in touch with us.

S: Spoiler knew Danedge from Montreal and he was going to put out our demo and at the same time Greg from mental saw a video online of us playing somewhere, and I guess Danedge and Greg got in contact cause they knew each other or something, I'm not really sure of that, but all of a sudden Mental was gonna take us to play some shows along the east coast.

At this stage, did any specific band or people have anything to do with the whole "justice mentality" (as in, touring from pretty much day one and really giving it your all)

F: Maybe Mental. But we still had to do it I guess. Looking back I spent 5 years working so hard for this band and doing everything ourselves. While others were making sure their relationship

would stay afloat or make sure that they had a decent diploma we were folding lyricsheets, writing songs, touring the world. To each his own you know. We owe Mental a lot, same deal for Dead Stop who took care of us and spread the word. S: We weren't like " we gotta do this band full time"; it was all very spontaneous, Justice was the only thing on our mind in those days, everything else was secondary. Only now in retrospect I can see how much Justice and hardcore in general meant to us in those days. Touring full time in those days wasn't even considered by us, we just wanted to get the most out of the momentum we had.

How was the demo received in your hometown scene when it was released? How was the local scene at the time? And how has it changed since then, if it has?

F: The demo caught on pretty quick. We started selling demos a week before the demo release at the last The Deal show and a couple of other shows. Our sellingstyle was

»HE ASKED ME WHILE I WAS EATING PROB THE WORST SHOW FOOD... 'YO, I WANNA RE-RELEASE LOOK ALIVE AND PUT IT ON AN LP TOGETHER WITH THE DEMO'... ME: 'SURE... EUH WHAT, FOR REAL?'«

aggressive, you were frowned upon if you didn't buy a demo(what's up Jeffrey!). Larry Edge looking over our shoulder must have helped scaring unknowing kids too. Anyway, the demo release show was sick, everyone knew the words. Dudes I respected a lot cuz (and basically admired) of what they achieved in the hardcore scene were stagedivin, singin every word, and shouting them right in our faces. It gives me the chills writing this. In one corner I'd see Michiel DS, Dossche, Hollanders skank... While somewhere else I saw Erik Tilburg stagediving and sing a long with Tuffin breathin in his neck. Wild. S: Hardcore shows were pretty lame when we started Justice, that was our main drive, to try and change that, and somehow, somehow, they did. At the time I kinda took that for granted I think, the fact that alot of dudes, older hardcore dudes, were into us and at the same time there were lots of newer kids getting into us. Now it kinda baffles me how that happened, but at the time for me, it was so obvious. **You started Complete Control records together with the guys in**



Dead Stop and Restless Youth. Was it a plan from the beginning to release your own records, or was it just how things turned out? Is Complete Control still an active label today?

F: We started it with Dead Stop, RY tagged along after they released their demo in 05. DS couldn't find a label that wouldn't rip them off and we figured it would be the same deal for us and we were siked to be on the same "label" as Dead Stop. We formed CCR after the Xclaim ideal, each bands pays for their own recordings and pressing... all money will go to the same band. Pretty simple and probably the best way to release a hardcore record. Do it yourself. Complete Control isn't doing anything anymore, all the bands are defunct. There is a time for everything and CCR had it's time I guess but who knows. S: We just didn't like any labels out there, and we loved dead stop, so it was kind of a perfect match for us. Complete Control helped Vogue(new Belgium band, check them out) to put out their first 7". And if there would be a new band inspiring enough, I'm sure they can put out their record under the CC name. **You started Complete Control records together with the guys in**

member the recording session for the first 7"? Was it a big deal for you to have a 7" in the works? Had any of you played on other records prior to the first Justice 7"?

F: Stief recorded before, I recorded something but none of us really know what we were doing. But at the time of recording Tilburg already joined and he learned us a lot. The first song he brought to the table was Light In The Dark, go figure. Tilburg introduced us to so much music and showed us how to write a song. The recording of the 7" was a lot of fun and another dream come true since we already played the Lintfabriek, the most important venue of Europe.

S: All I remember from that session is me sitting behind the drums. Like everything else that was happeing at the time, we always had big expectations but at the same time we were so focused, it was a cool high to be on. **When did you realize that Justice was going to take a lot of your time, did you have to quit jobs etc. to put more time into the band?**

F: We putted our regular lives on hiatus just to do this band, it didn't happen at a certain moment but slowly we were doing more

and more, we weren't really interested in anything else. Some of us worked shitty jobs or flunked at school or stopped going to school and started working at his dads company... maybe the worst idea ever. But we never thought of it as a curse... Justice was a blessing. S: From even before our first practise Justice was the most important thing in our lives, I guess that's super naive, looking back, but that's the truth. I def quit a few jobs, moved to Antwerp and got really poor doing Justice. **How much touring did you do on the 7"?**

F: We toured the eastcoast, and Europe a couple of times on that 7". We sold 3000 7"s, 1000 lps(us version of the Look Alive 7" and a couple of thousand CDs... nuts. S: We did two weeks with mental in the states, then two weeks with mental in europe, I guess 10 days with RJ in Europe, or was that after the Lp came out? Then we spend a lot of time writing that LP to have it out in time for the summer of 05.

How did you get on Lockin Out records? Did you know Greg before Justice started?

F: No we didn't know Greg. He just found out about through that yout-

ube video, and the demo. He asked me on our Euro tour together. I loved everything Lockin Out did, but he never did any bands besides his close friends so I kinda came as a surprise, I was thrilled! He asked me while I was eating prob the worst show food... "Yo, I wanna re-release Look Alive and put it on an LP together with the demo"... me: "sure... euh what, for real?" S: He saw a vid of us online so-mewhere, but he asked us to be on Lockin Out when we were touring Europe together, which was real cool of him, since it's a risky move for a US label to release a Euro band.

Touring the US the first time vs. touring Europe the first time - main differences/similarities?

F: I don't know, touring is harder cuz there is no food or a place to stay but at the same point there are cheaps hotels and cheap food. I think the shows are kinda the same thing. Maybe US kids go off more while we tend to stick around a little bit longer. I enjoyed both.

Did you decide early on after the 7" that you wanted to do an LP?

F: Yeah, that was the plan. We still rehearsed a couple of times a week and we kept writing better and better songs so it was obvious to record a full length. We feared it though cuz a full length is tricky to make but it's okay to be scared and it turned out pretty good even though I don't like the drumsound of the record at all.

The 7" (+ demo) was also released as a CD on Dead and Gone Records, how did you get in touch with them? Did you know Ian before the band or did he approach as any label would do with a band they like?

F: I knew him from his bands In The Clear(I interviewed him for my zine) and The Last Chance. But weren't really friends or so-mething. We got to know eachother better when we toured the UK. He is such a good dude, probably one of the best dudes I got to know through hardcore. He wanted to do the CD version and we thought he would do a good job and so he did. No complaints.

S: I knew ian, from touring the UK with another band I was in, ian's band also played our demo release show, so he knew what was going on. i just figured we needed a label to put out the cd version of the 7", so i brought him demos of the 7" songs when we played the UK. He liked them.

Writing and recording the first LP, what was different from writing and recording the first 7"?

F: Yes, very different, as I said its hard to keep 10 songs inte-resting. We felt we had to step up to our game. A 7" is cool cuz it's fast and quick... you can listen to 4 or 5 songs without losing your attention, it's the best way to introduce your band. It's way dif-

ferent than an LP.

How did you come up with the idea for the artwork for the s/t LP?

F: That's all Spoilers idea. I wanted a real painting, something you can look at for hours. Spoiler just painted something that I couldn't grasp at the time, I loved it. Everything on the cover means so-mething. Spoiler is a genius.

Speaking of artwork, sometime around the release of the LP, Spoiler left the band and moved to Canada. How did this affect the band? Did you consider breaking up or were you certain that you wanted to continue?

F: We never considered breaking up cuz we me and stief felt that we were onto something. It wasn't the end of the ride for us. Me and Stief just continued what we were doing, the s/t 7" was the first result... maybe it's a little bit different, more progressed but we didn't see it that way, it was a natural evolution of our minds captured on a 7".

S: We definitely wanted to continue, and we had spoilers blessing, we just knew there was a lot left that we could accomplish. Hein (now in Union Town) played Bass for a little while.

How did Sike join the band? Was he the first you tried out after Spoiler left or did you have someone else in-between?

F: We tried a couple of dudes, didn't really work out. Sike did work out, we knew him from going to shows, he was always upfront and singing a long, good dude. He was younger and we needed that, spark the fire.

S: We were on some weekend and sike was with us for some reason and prior to me moving to guitar he had tried out for second guitar once, but he didn't cut it. We asked him to join us that weekend.

Did you have any other line up changes up until this point? What about Erik Tilburg?

F: Erik left cuz he was too busy with school, he just couldn't do it anymore. It's a sacrifice that he didn't want to make anymore and we had to respect that. We didn't replace him, we liked the idea of a 4piece better anyways. It's easier and you have more room in the van. We also switched drummers right before recording Escapades which kind of sucked but thank god cuz Daan is the best drummer I've been in a band with.

S: We had a couple different line ups, Arthur from abusive action was going to join us once, as I said Hein joined us for a minute and gert from Dead Stop also played a LOT of shows with us. Erik quit because of school.

What was it like to record with Don Fury? I guess he had some cool stories to tell. How did you come up with the idea of recording with him?

F: Fury recorded most of my fa-

vourite bands so it was pretty obvious that I was into recording with Don Fury. Stief had the same idea and there you go, simple as that. Don Fury had a couple of cool stories but I think he forgot the most of it, he's kinda out of his mind.

It's fair to say that you were one of the biggest current hardcore bands, with kids being into your stuff all over the globe, but I don't think I've seen any current band get so much slack for just doing their own thing. Do you follow what's being written on messageboards and such?

F: It's hard to avoid it. It's weird that we bother so many people, we just do/did what we love. We just wrote our songs, did whatever felt right. We could have written the same records over and over again, we could have gone for the same shit everybody does but we didn't. But while others were talking their shit on boards we were travelling the world, meeting people, poolhopping, raging malls, moshing to Dead Stop and Mental, loving the Bad Brains so we win, they lose!

From day one, you did everything totally DIY, booked your own tours, released your own records etc. Do you think bands today are to caught up with getting on the right labels, when they could just do it themselves instead? Is there anything negative about the way you've done everything by yourselves? I mean it must cause a lot of stress sometimes, when there's money involved and all.

F: I think that a lot of bands are just lazy. Almost every day a lame band send me a msg on the Powered myspace to check their profile cuz they're looking for a label. Give me a fucking break. Why should I bother bands who donit bother doing a decent demo or something. DIY often gets linked with half assed releases, fuck that, when you do something, do it good. If you plan things, make sure you got everything settled there are no negative things, it just takes a lot of time. While most bands can do whatever they want we were working our ass of but what really matters to me that everything we got we earned.

How would you say that your time in Justice has changed you as a person, if it has, that is? And in 10, or even 20 years, what do you think will be your fondest memory of Justice?

F: I kinda grew up with Justice, me and Stief we're just mindless idiots and we still are in a lot of ways but we know how to do stuff, we're focused when it comes down to getting things together, chasing your dreams. My fondest memories are definitely all the tours we did, all the travelling. Waking up in van filled with your





best friends, driving to a show. I also love getting siked about new songs, new shirts etc. **You and Dead Stop made a huge impact on the Belgian (and European) hardcore scene. In 2004-2005 me and my friends talked a lot about your scene and how amazing it seemed, and how new great bands were popping up everywhere. What was it like to be a part of something like that? and did you notice any difference between your scene and the scene here in Sweden, where we've got some good bands, but no real supporting scene. Do kids in Belgium have a different mindset and take more pride in their local bands?**

F: It was the time of my life, every weekend we saw bands like Dead Stop, Restless Youth play crowds who went out of their minds, thank god people were into us to. We were very supportive of our own scene and it was striking that our own bands got a better reaction then any touring US band. It was the opposite way before that. Every show there was a new zine it was a very interesting time. I think that you force those things, it all just happens the right bands, the right time.

You toured Europe with Mental in the summer of 2005. You played two shows in Sweden then, in Stockholm (Kafé 44) and in Trollhättan (Skate ramp venue). Do you remember anything in particular about those two shows? Or any stories from that tour that come to mind?

F: I'm probably going to mix up tours but I remember I was really siked to see Pete Amdam on the trollhattan show. Erik Anarchy was also there, I loved Subject To Change and I still do, he's cool. Daniel Eyeball was also there, he is one of those guys I'll hold dear forever. Didn't Soulfire also play??? Or Soulcraft... I think they changed their name right before or after. Anyway, the show was cool. There was a balcony so I could watch Mental the first couple of songs from up there and then hit the pit. The Stockholm show was pretty cool, good response, I really like that venue. We hung out with kalle the whole day. I have a lot of stories about that tour. But most of all I think about how much I was into Mental... I watched them every night, every night they made me lose my shit. They were a real inspiration to the most of us and they really stood for what a hardcore band should stand for but most of all what the youth stands for... people change and so did Mental. I think they were my favourite live band to this day.

Now on to the s/t 7", it seems that around this time people started talking about Justice changing into something more rockish, more Supertouch and late Bad Brains influenced. To me however, Justice

always seemed to evolve and try new things. Do you agree, or was the change into your later sound something you had decided to do?
F: Definitely, we never set out to write more "rockish" music... it just happened. We wanted to try to do different things and push ourselves to do better. We never had a band meeting about changing our sound... cuz we didn't change I think, we just progressed in a natural way. We started to listen to different bands, different music so that also had something to do with our "progression". **This 7" was the first release on Powered Records. Was Powered something you wanted to put a lot of time into, and did you see it going where it is today - one of the best and most popular hardcore labels in Europe? You both had the experience from previous labels as well as your own [popular] band to put out so what did you expect from the label?**

F: I wanted to be able to release bands that I wanted to release. I did CCR with a couple of others but the philosophy behind CCR prevented me of using it as a vehicle to release more records. So I started Powered Records, Stief and I always saw eye to eye when it came down to music so he got involved too. Geert joined later. I never visioned some sort of future dream for Powered, just releasing good records and keep things going as long as I want. The layout and the packaging of each record is a very big deal for me and all involved in Powered. Thats what keeps us going. Actually knowing the people in the band is a plus. Powered is doing okay but it's damn hard to keep it afloat. People don't understand, there is no money to be made with releasing hardcore records, only depths. It's hard to keep focussed cuz we all get older and want to do other things or have to do other things like working a job to make a living and paying bills.

You made a European tour with Underdog on this 7". How did that happen? What was it like to tour with them, being a bit younger than those guys?

F: I booked the tour and it was a lot of stress for me. I hate dealing with money in hardcore but that was inevitable now. Underdog needed money, they have families to support etc... That was a headache for me but it all turned out ok. I still can't really believe we toured with Underdog. It's hard to grasp starring at a record called The Vanishing Point for hours, reading the lyrics while listening to it and at the other time actually being on the road with them. They turned out to be good people to have around and I'm still friends with all of them. Underdog gave us gear to record Escapades,

Richie sang on the record, we can go for free pizza at Russ's pizza place whenever we want. They keep asking me to book another tour for them, one day it will happen. S: Flip made that happen, he stared emailing with Russ about some stuuf on ebay.Those guys were super cool, we could really relate with them and vice versa, they we just older versions of ourselves. We would listen to their stories and try to joke around as much as possible, I'm real stoked that we did that.

Describe the song writing process for the material on the Escapades LP. It's quite different from the previous LP. Did you work with the songs in a different way?

F: Once again it was another challenge and we were super psyched about the songs we had so far and we were even more siked about recording with Don Fury. S: Well, Erik was mostly in charge of songwriting on our first LP, also because I just moved from drums to guitar. Writing escapades was all up to me and it was kind of difficult. Our drummer quit during the process and about three months before the sceduled recordingdate Daan joined us and all we did was practise. Daan lives in Holland but he moved in with me for two months so we could practise everyday, that was supercool. I really loved working on those songs everyday.

And Filip how has the lyrical side of Justice changed, influential wise and style wise?

F: The demo and the first 7" are very basic but that's where my head was. But looking now record after record I really started to write more personal lyrics. I hated to play a couple of songs cuz of that like Don't Tell Anyone or Do You Know or any song on the last record. I was never into writing political lyrics or things like that. Those things have been said before and I probably couldn't say it any better so why should I bother.

Stief, you've developed a lot as a song writer from the demo to the later records. Where do you find inspiration from today that you didn't in the beginning? What's changed in that aspect of Justice?

S: I wrote some parts here and there on the demo and the 7" and then on elephant there's maybe a couple songs I wrote, but when I was the only guitarist in Justice it was all up to me so i kind of picked up stuff along the way, right now it's dangerous because I assume to know things about writing a song which can something lead to writing a bad song if you catch my drift. i just want to write the best songs possible, the right vibe, the right build up, the right structure, it's hard juggling all those elements into a song. Maybe in the past I was

more focused on writing good riffs and now I try to think about the song as a whole.

You recorded a video for "Oh How We Laughed". Give us the story, how did it happen? Who came up with the concept and general theme for it?

F: A friend of us who studied film at the university of Gent had a school project. He had to make a musicvideo of a band. He asked us and we thought it would be a fun thing to do. So it was, it was a hard day of work though... my whole body was sour of going off (yes, posing) for the song the entire day. There wasn't any money so we had to find a good location and go from there. and we liked the idea of the abandoned factory which also kinda stood for the song... looking back on better times.

S: Some guy we know shot it, I was gonna come up with a good idea for it, but in the end we just decided to shoot a video instead of thinking about what kind we were going to shoot.

Looking back, how do you look at the Escapades LP? What memories does it bring to you?

F: I'm not that happy with the record. It's alright but I could have been so much better. I didn't like working with the producer that much now I think of it. But it was cool cuz we wanted to record with Don Fury. We did it... but I'd do things differently if I could turn back time. We also had to switch drummers a month or so before recording cuz our former drummer turned out to be a pussy. We owe Gert for filling in and working on the songs with us. Thank god Daan joined the band a couple of weeks before recording. As said before, he is one of the best drummers I have ever seen.

S: I think of it as a learning experience, we got to record in NYC with Don Fury, we tried to come up with stuff that WE thought was cool. It's just a great memorabilia about the certain time in the life of me and my friends.

Do you feel like you accomplished something with this record that you hadn't done before?

F: Yes, record with Don Fury. We signed to Reflections Records... we were thinking that they could push us more. They did their job but nothing we could haven't done ourselves. It was all a big mind fuck for me. People hated on us for writing these songs and being who we were while I just wanted to have fun, gig and tour. I took things too much to heart. But it's all good. We wrote and recorded the record, and toured on it. Maybe we lost a couple kids who were into us but I never did Justice for them, only for myself.

After Escapades, you went into tour mode again. Did it take you long to decide how and when you wanted to



do some new stuff? Myself, as a guitarist, I'm constantly thinking of new songs, and ways to mess around with new riffs. Do you work the same way, or can you take a pause from that every now and then, if you know what I mean?

S: During those couple tours i started fucking around with what would later become 'what have we become' , I just had an idea about a riff and a cool break to go into something else and during soundcheck I showed it to the band. So yea i'm always thinking about the next idea or song.

The news that you were breaking up was released about the same time as you announced that you were going to do a final record. What was it like knowing that these songs were going to be your last? Do you feel that the songs gave Justice the good-bye you deserved?

F: The songs on the Live And Learn record are pretty much my favourite Justice songs. We were working on new songs when I pulled the plug. Pretty soon we decided we would work out the songs more and record them for what was going to be our final record released on our final show. I already wrote a couple of lyrics for songs but I threw them all away and started over again. The recording of the record was the most fun time I ever had in a studio. We took our time, the studio was cool and we tried everything we wanted. We did a lot. Maybe it was cuz of knowing that this was going to be our last record that we really went all out.

S: When Flip called me up to say we were quitting I honestly didn't feel like doing anything anymore, not even a last show but I'm glad we did it. Working on Live And Learn was so relaxed, there was no pressure at all, we had a little expierence from doing escapades and we knew this was going to be better. So that record became my favourite justice record although it's probably our less known record.

Meaningless is a very different song, with another vocal style than the other Justice songs. Was that something you had wanted to try for a longer time or more like "let's try this instead, it might turn out cool"?

F: It's was more of "Lets try this". S: I came up with how the vocal pattern should have to go and Flip filled in it nicely. The way he used his voice though was something he came up with at the very last second in the studio, he just wanted to give it a try like that and it sounded cool so we went with it. I thought that was pretty ingenious of him.

Tell us about the last show. Unfortunately neither of us could be there, but it seemed to be a good time and a nice closure for Justice.

F: We played big shows before where most of the times not that many people cared about us. Now we had a room filled with 800 people, all for there under one roof for Justice. The show was awesome and I thank everybody that came out. At first it was supposed to be in a smaller venue that could hold 300 people, a week after we started "ticketsales" we already sold 400 tickets so we had to move it. I didn't want to deny anyone, everyone who wanted to come had to be there. All the bands had a good response, most of my friends were there from all over, unfortunately I couldn't hang out with them that much cuz of stress and I was also too busy with doing the show and selling records. I don't remember that much from our set, it just happened. A friend

of mine filmed the whole thing and I only grasped the intensity of the show when I saw the video.

S: It was the best, sooo many kids came out from all over, every band played a good set, just good vibes all over. It was like, we toured a lot so we knew this kid from here and that kid from there, and all those kids were at that show, that was awesome. Well obviously not all of them, but still it felt like they were all there.

Now with the band put to rest, and some time has passed since you played your last show, is there any regret in making that decision? Would you consider starting the band again if the feeling is right?

F Me for my part I regret the choice I have made cuz now I really think we could have done more stuff and hold it down for a while longer. But at the time I couldn't, I hit-ted rock bottem and quitting Justice was the right thing to do I thought. But now I kind of miss doing music, I wonder how we would have done with the new songs cuz we never play-ed them live really. I wonder how we would have sounded. I doubt I'll ever will do music as I was doing with Justice, cuz it was a full on commitment. What's done is done and so is Justice. Simple as that.

S: What's done can't be undone I think, but who knows, we def won't reunite, but we might do something in the distant future. For me there's no regret, it was the right time to quit, but I still think highly of those days. Loud and Clear are still active and Rhythm to the madness even more so, so I guess those two bands, together with Powered records take up some of your time, but are there any plans for something new between the members of Justice? A new band?

F: Loud And Clear and RTTM aren't really bands that want to play out every week, they're more of projects I think. Powered Records is definitely busy, too busy at times. S: Loud and clear is just something we did as a project and now we just play a show once in a while, just for the fun of it. RTTM also started as a project but grew kind of into a real band. There aren't any real other things going on right now but we're always ready to do somthing new, we're not gonna stop making music all of a sudden, it's what we do.

I believe that is it. Thank you a million for taking time to answer this interview, and for being a truly inspirational band. Good luck with all your future adventures. Anything to add, so sum up this interview nicely?

F: I just want to thank you for doing this interview. I wanna say what's up to all my friends, people change but the friends you make in hardcore are for ever. Thank you if cared about Justice, understood what we wanted to do and what we were about.

S: Thanks for helping us out whenever you could. I guess I want to say that people have to realize that Filip is the hardest working guy I know, I repeat him a lot for that, they don't see how much work that goes into a touring band and a record label, plus he's setting up all these tours. If everything goes smoothly then everyone thinks it's normal, but if one guy doesn't get a response to an email it's the biggest problem in the world. But no one sees thet work that goes into it for almost nothing in return except for the idea that you did something cool. I loved Justice and everything and everyone that had to do with that band.



Ulf speaks his mind

I need air

Everything about this song is great. It's an awesome opening track for the Escapades LP, and the guest vocals by Richie Underdog.. "It's getting dark, I'm almost blind" - Goosebumps.

Meaningless

I know that I stated in the previous issue of Effort that this was my favorite Justice song, but going through all the Justice releases (for the interview, and of course, for just jamming great hardcore wax), I can't put this above I Need Air, but it's still an amazing song, and the melodic vocals are great, and something I really didn't see coming.

Light in the dark

Really cool riffs, as always with Justice, and the line "you can flip the switch, but I won't lose the light" - instant classic. Also, if my memory doesn't fail me, this was the song that made me check out Justice in the first place.

Geert - Powered Records

Top 3 Justice songs:

- light in the dark
- every inch
- without face

Top 3 Justice shows:

- every set @ lintfabriek, kontich
- set @ Ninja Fest London, UK 2004
- set @ Light the fuse fest Hengelo, NL 2005

Favorite Justice release:

- Elephant Skin lp

Kalle has his say

Without face

The intro riff is what makes this song as good as it is. Don't get me wrong, it's an incredible song nevertheless but the opening riff makes it stand out. It's what separates Justice from the rest.

Intro

2, 3 Justice. Enough said.

Fish on a hook

The breakdown in this song is just... Well, first of all it's "too fast" for a breakdown which makes it amazing and on top of that it's... just...amazing.



VOICE YOUR OPINION

THE REAL TERROR

One with his business profits from the torture of animals in a cage. One with glue and spray paint expresses her outrage. Guess who they call a "fur terrorist"?

After some damage done to a fur coat store called Ateliér Henry Philip in Oslo earlier this year, the Norwegian newspaper Aftenposten was on the case. With headlines such as "The fur terrorists are back - windows broken and locks glued" they tried to whip up some good old paranoid media frenzy. Say that again? Terrorists? Smash a window, and you're thrown in the same bin as Bin Laden or Timothy McVeigh?

The Norwegian Police Security Service allegedly have 10-15 animal rights activists under surveillance. In 2003 the Scotland Yard considered the Animal Liberation Front the second biggest terror threat in Great Britain. In Austria masked and armed officers broke into the homes and offices of animal rights activists, violating their basic rights, keeping them locked up as members of a "criminal organization" for over three months without concrete charge. In the US, six animal rights activists and the organization Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty USA (SHAC USA) were convicted for "animal enterprise terrorism". Not even for breaking a window, but for operating a web site that protested the Huntingdon Life Sciences, they face an aggregate of 23 years in Federal Prison. What happened to freedom of speech? What happened to human rights? And in this scare-mongering climate, how can we continue the fight for animal rights?

I'm not a Maoist, but the Chairman once said something that always made sense to me: "To Be Attacked by the Enemy Is Not a Bad Thing but a Good Thing," The attacks by the government is a clear sign that animal rights activists are onto something.

The Network for Animal Freedom are currently campaigning to ban fur in Norway, and you can see the shocking movie "Lies of the Fur Industry" at www.forbypels.no. "Animals with large untreated wounds on their bodies, body parts bitten off, eye infections or broken legs are not exceptional cases, but usual sights at the fur farms. It was dreadful. It's time that people get to see what is done to animals in these fur farms," says one activist.

The media, the government and the industry may continue to spread their filthy lies. We know who the real terrorists are.

Peace & Love,
Erik Anarchy/Strike A Match
c/o T.E.S. Kaluza
Theresegate 5 A
0358 Oslo
Norway

TAKE A STAND!

"Take a stand
Stand your ground
Don't let the world push you around"

As most of the time, Youth of Today said it best. Lately I have discovered a new side about myself that I am not at all comfortable with. Or maybe not as much a new side as and old side that has become jaded and dull from all the negative impressions I am forced to face in my everyday life. As a person, I have my personal opinions pretty much figured out. I am very confident in what I believe is right and wrong. Yet I find myself turning away from situations where I should have taken a stand against what I felt is not OK. Not to pick a fight or be a bigger man than anyone else, but just to put my foot down and say "enough is enough, now here's my side of the coin". And this scares me, because I see it all the time in people around me, people who just tag along and do their nine to fives, being content if there's a pay check in the mail once a month. I guess I'm growing up, but there's a difference between growing up and growing cold. I shouldn't grow away from my ideals, I should let them grow with me. The most powerful tool we have is our voice and our opinions. Our own values and ideals is what makes us who we are and without expressing our sincere opinions, there is, in the end no communication - no dialog. So what do we fear, by not voicing our opinions? Disagreements? Arguments? I think there's more to it than that. Yes, there might be a clash of views but to not get stuck and too comfortable with our values, we all need to test them from time to time, because we ARE different, and in our own minds we might just have one side of the coin, if even that. I think we have a lot to learn from each other but most of the time we don't see it because we're too caught up in our daily routine to take notice, react and TAKE A STAND.

Ulf

GET INVOLVED!

When we did Effort #1 we tried to not be too enthusiastic about sales. We printed 100 copies to take on tour and another 100 to have when we got back home. Of course a part of those zines went to the bands and people who helped out in other ways but still, a big portion of the first 100 copies were actually sold on that tour (1 week) in countries like Czech Republic and Poland so getting back home to Sweden was inspiring in a way. Up next was a Bane show. I guess 200 kids were there. Result? About 4 zines sold. Oh well. Have Heart/Verse show with 350 kids. Result? About 4 zines again. There's a huge barrier between the youth of today and the youth of earlier generations when it comes to demos and zines, I'm not jaded or putting the young ones down but supporting zines and putting out demos (not as a 7" or online) seem to be a lost art. There's no understanding or support for making zines nor is there any excitement when a new zine comes out, instead a more common reaction is 'a zine? What's that?'. Hardcore's more than moshing and having the latest records in iTunes so isn't zines a crucial part of the core these days? All of the most ecstatic feedbacks we got were from near or above 30 year old. Coincidence? Probably not.

Kalle

INSIDE OUT

PHOTO: DAVID SINE



NO FOR AN ANSWER

PHOTO: DAVID SINE



RADIO SILENCE



Radio Silence must be one of the most talked about books in hardcore for ages. Myself, I can only think of classics such as All Ages, Banned In DC or American Hardcore and over and over again catch myself thinking 'Damn, this book is even better'. No matter how you rank books on hardcore and punk rock music there's no denying the void which has been filled by this book. Radio Silence is an instant classic. This interview was made with [Anthony Pappalardo](#).

- I met Nathan at an In My Eyes show in the late 1990s and we re-connected in New York City shortly after I moved here in 2002. We were talking about there needed to be a hardcore book that was more than what we were seeing, something in the spirit of Banned In DC but covered more scenes. We are not slagging other books we just felt that hardcore is always shown in a narrow spectrum and never covering all it's parts. There were books on zines or flyers but nothing that captured the whole experience. Another factor was that many of these books covered one chunk but didn't cover the late 80s/early 90s which was just as exciting and vital as any other time in hardcore. We both knew that it would take stepping back and not putting our personality into the content but into the presentation to really get this done the right way. We had an opportunity to present hardcore in a new way and give it the respect and perspective it deserved.

How did you get MTV involved? Were they there from day one or did you finish the book before looking for a publisher?

- We had an idea of what we wanted to do and started putting together samples of what it would look like before really getting into compiling the book, we knew it would be a massive undertaking and we needed some assurance that it would be well distributed, promoted and produced the way it needed to be done. We found an agent that secures book deals for music related books and presented them with the idea. Several publishers were interested but MTV was willing to give us 100% creative control and print the book the way it needed to be done. I laugh when I read reviews of the book that make it sound like MTV wrote the book or that MTV is out to exploit hardcore. Books are the bastard of entertainment in the digital world we live in, there couldn't be anything less profitable. Our editor Jacob thought it was a great project, loves the Bad Brains and wanted to see the book get done, any hesitations we had about MTV were gone about ten minutes into the meeting as they are great people who were excited about doing something that hadn't been done before.

What did you say you wanted to different than say, All Ages and American Hardcore? Do you think these goals were achieved?

- First off I think those books

are vital because they tell different stories and have different aims. We're constantly asked why we did the book or what the relevance of doing another hardcore book is and my answer is always the same: At one point there was ONE book about Vietnam, one book about space, one book about JFK. You can't get a full understanding about something without there being information out there and our goal was to present things differently and show that there's a totally different way to cover this topic. Many of the other books we have seen and read about hardcore didn't have the production values that the topic deserved. American Hardcore had some great information but it really cut off when Mr. Blush felt hardcore died and that is important to his story but as we all know hardcore is bigger than ever and constantly growing so there was so much there to cover. The book is one of the only projects I've been involved in that really captured all the original ideas and goals we initially had. So many times you get involved in something and the passion is there then it fizzles out due to a million factors or the timing for something isn't right and it goes unnoticed but this was a totally different process and it's been really rewarding so far.

How long did you work with the book?

- From idea to publishing date it was almost four full years. We both work full time and had to squeeze everything in on vacation time, weekends and nights. **Tracking down everyone involved in the book, pictures, shirts etc must have taken forever, did you expect the book to be this in depth or was it more the fact that the deeper you dug the more information you felt you couldn't leave out?**

- Every person we found led to them referring us to other people who had important stories, collections and images. It felt like the book grew 50 pages every time we left someone's house, there were times when we hit a stride and would stumble onto something that really opened up a new dimension of the book. Gail Rush's Boston photos are the perfect example of this, no one had seen any of those images and I couldn't imagine the book without them. There was a style and attitude in Boston that was only documented in a few images that everyone had seen but Gail had a grip of images that re-

ally added some depth to the Boston Crew, it's a shame we didn't have room for all of them.

Did you ever felt like throwing in the towel, that you went over your head with thise book?

- Never, we were 100% committed to this project and if anything we were too ambitious. The hardest part was just communicating what we wanted and needed from people, once we had print outs, something tangible that people could thumb through the idea started speaking to people and the project started building steam. When we'd show up to someone's house with several cameras, lighting kits and video cameras we set a tone immediately that this wasn't a zine or a magazine article, we were setting out to really make a definitive book on hardcore's imagery and I really feel like we succeeded in showing hardcore in a new light.

How did you know where to start, there must've been so much you wanted in the book. What was the first thing you did for the book? What was easiest and what took you the longest?

- At first it was difficult to dig up the things we really needed so we started by just photographing all our records and t-shirts, then we just reached out to anyone and everyone with emails, phone calls and word of mouth. Luckily from being involved with hardcore for so long we knew where to look and had a lot of friends that held onto things. My good friend Chris Cannon was an Anthrax Club local and kept a list of every show he had ever attended, he showed me the list when I was a freshman in college and had such vivid stories about seeing shows at the Anthrax, getting a Project X shirt and Porcell telling him that an XL wouldn't be too big for his skinny 16 year old frame, he put the shirt on and it went down to his knees and the neck looked like someone with a giant head tried the shirt on and stretched it out, he mentioned the luke warm Jolt soda, the perfect stage and seeing random shows on a tuesday night. Chris like Jeff Nelson is a true archivist so when we started the project we reached out to him and he let us photograph his collection and gave us some stories to go along with everything. Eventually we had enough of an idea sketched out where we felt like we could approach Dischord and ask Jeff and Ian for help. We have the utmost respect for them so we wanted to show that we weren't just

two flakes with beards and an idea, we wanted to show them that we did our homework and really wanted to shine a spotlight on the rich images that Dischord gave to the hardcore scene. Jeff invited us into his home to hang out and dig through his massive archives, we stayed a few days and realized we could do a book just on his design work. He's a true master of his craft and his work added a new dimension to the book. Later on we were able to go to the Dischord house and spend time with Ian, once he saw what we were doing and felt comfortable he started pulling out some amazing letters, shirts, cassette tapes and images that we knew that this was going to be a special book. We photographed some shirts that Ian and Cynthia Connolly gave us in the Dischord house against the wall where the head shots for Out of Step were taken, it was a stormy dark day and there was a very somber tone cast over the house mixed in with a lot of bright anecdotes and laughter, it felt like we were really at the end of our journey.

Any last thing you'd like to add, a cool story that was left out of the book or something about TYF/IME. Anything really.

- This was a collaborative process, without everyone's input and archives it wouldn't have worked. Everyone in this process was absolutely essential, even the people that didn't actually make it into the pages. I think blogs and instant media are incredible and a very valuable resource but I also think that there needs to be more documentation of hardcore in print. What we do isn't secret anymore, hardcore isn't below the radar so trying to preserve it like a handshake club isn't relevant anymore, we have bigger channels, better technology and a more perspective and should take these opportunities to make books and documentaries or push hardcore into new forums. Are you sick of books about the Clash and Ramones, I like both bands but I'd rather read the ingredients on a cereal box because both bands have been over exposed, if something new is being shown that's great but I feel like there are so many retreads on punk and it's just spinning its wheels. In summary, think big, don't have boundaries to your idea and leave something behind that people can really absorb themselves into later, I really feel that this is important. Hardcore is the center of so many lives but plays second fiddle to so many other genres because of the lack of proper documentation.

It's crazy, TYF and IME seem like bands I just did or something but TYF started 15 years ago and IME 11 years ago, that really blows my mind. I was very meticulous at first recording every practice, writing down every show, taking pictures on tour but I was so swept up in the moment that I was more concerned with talking to people, exploring, or just having some time to myself that I didn't stick with it and get the results I wanted. Before digital cameras I probably had about 4 pictures of myself and my friends. The thing about TYF that people overlook is that what we set out to do was VERY calculated, it wasn't about 'yeah let's do a straight edge band', we knew that without it being over-the-top it was going to be just another band. We app-

Later on we were able to go to the Dischord house and spend time with Ian, once he saw what we were doing and felt comfortable he started pulling out some amazing letters, shirts, cassette tapes and images that we knew that this was going to be a special book.

ropriated every stereotype of a straight edge band and magnified it so that you had to make a decision immediately and go 'I love this' or 'I fucking hate these clowns'. Our first big show where we really got an insane reaction was at the Middle East in Cambridge, MA opening for Earth Crisis and Rama Mayo and a few other people wore football uniforms and dove through a banner before we played, the place went nuts and it really set a fun tone before we played even though we were singing these totally extreme songs. I really felt that we'd just be a one trick pony if we didn't get more serious as the band progressed and eventually that's exactly what the band chose to do otherwise it would have been a complete mockery. IME was the same way, always moving forward faster than we could imagine, we were hell bent, really on this mission to do everything we could before we expired. The result of this is that we had no fucking clue what the hell we were doing, we lacked any sense of logic or business and lost cash and sanity along the way because we didn't care. There was no plan other than to make great records and play hard every night. Sometimes after we played someone would

go 'Man you guys were out of tune' or 'you should try to play more instead of jumping around' and I'd take that as a compliment, we'd think about the bands that impressed us the most and it was about energy, it was about every member of the band committing to an idea, we'd go off in practice, we'd go off at every show, we never mailed it in, eventually we got tight and were able to play and bring that level of energy to the stage too and that was our peak. One of my favorite shows was in Cleveland, OH on the Revelation Records tour in 1998, Jeff who played guitar in IME was in Better Than A Thousand at the time, everyone in IME was tight with Jeff and we wanted to do something special for him, we went to kinkos and made Jeff Masks from this picure on the back of the BT1K album. When they played we were all moshing and diving as Jeff, they looked amazing and we even gave one to Tony Erba who was dancing along with us.After the show we crashed at this girl's house in OH who lived right on the water, it was a rain storm with thunder and lightning but we couldn't resist jumping off her roof into the water, it was mad sketchy you had to jump out and clear her deck and the water was kind of shallow, when you landed you ended up in soft sand and there were trash bags and shit that would stick to yr legs. That night we all surrounded Cappo who was in a really good mood and quizzed him about everything which was kind of funny, he probably stopped listening to hardcore records around the time of the GB 7', that might have been the last hardcore album he ever heard. We'd be like 'have you heard Insted' and he'd answer 'Uhhmmm I am sure we played with them, they were very nice guys, really cool guys, Porcell liked them' or 'what about the Burn 7' that was on Rev' and he'd start fucking laughing 'Haaa...dude I have no clue , I don't even know when that came out, what year was that'. It was pretty amazing, he did talk about loving CIA and Human Sexual Response's first album. It has to be hard for Ray because everyone really digs into him, myself included, he's not a person who can just be in a room, he's constantly analyzed and I think that was one time where Ray really just had a good fucking time with all of us and didn't feel like he had to be Ray Cappo he was just laughing and really getting off on the fact that we were in love with so many records, many on Rev that he had never even heard. Speak

714 was also on that tour, Dan O and Ray weren't exactly tight at that time so we made it our mission to make them hang out because we thought both dudes were cool as hell. Damian threw a party after our Philadelphia show and invited all the bands, his sister also had people over so it was a bunch of our philly friends, his younger sister's friends, some of the BT1K guys, Speak and then some people from Earth Crisis randomly show up. I hadn't really met Dan at this point and I wanted to break the ice and I go 'Yo Dan , how come on the NFAA LP you look black' and he response 'Son, I wear black on the outside because that's how I feel on the inside' I corrected him and go 'NO MAN WHY DO YOU LOOK BLACK, I HAD THAT ON CASSETTE ..in your picture you're wearing a Verbal Assault all over print shirt and you straight up look BLACK, you're SO white'

He started dying laughing and goes 'ohhhh...bad printing job I guess haaaaa'

We seldom cared about doing the right thing, we also dressed up as Suicidal Tendencies for one show, for no reason really and announced all our songs as Suicidal songs despite the fact that we never played any. I got an ear infection that tour because we'd constantly pull over and jump off shit into the water, and often times it was straight up shit, gross muddy water, stinky water, we had no clue why we did that we just had to. I remember feeling dizzy as fuck and puking because i had slime water in my head. Ray our roadie also maced himself by accident on of our last tours, he thought it was Bianca mouth spray but, nope it was mace. We told him it was mace but he didn't believe it and sprayed it down his throat, we all started coughing and he doubled over in pain. When he sprung up it was like the old Dr.Jeckell and Mr.Hyde movies because his neck had swollen up to a width larger than his actual head and he was bright red. We pulled over to a rest stop and got him a gallon of milk to ease the burn, he downed it and ran off , we eventually found him behind a dumpster. A trail of milk-puke was our clue, he was super pissed and in a lot of pain so we kind of left him alone for a while. Eventually he felt well enough to start a fight with our other roadie Eric aka Rusty which ended with them rolling around on the grass at a rest stop and leaving a bite mark on Rusty's side.

Touring isn't really that hard, it's being around sweaty humans in an uncomfortable van driving through the heartland of America that gets a little tedious.



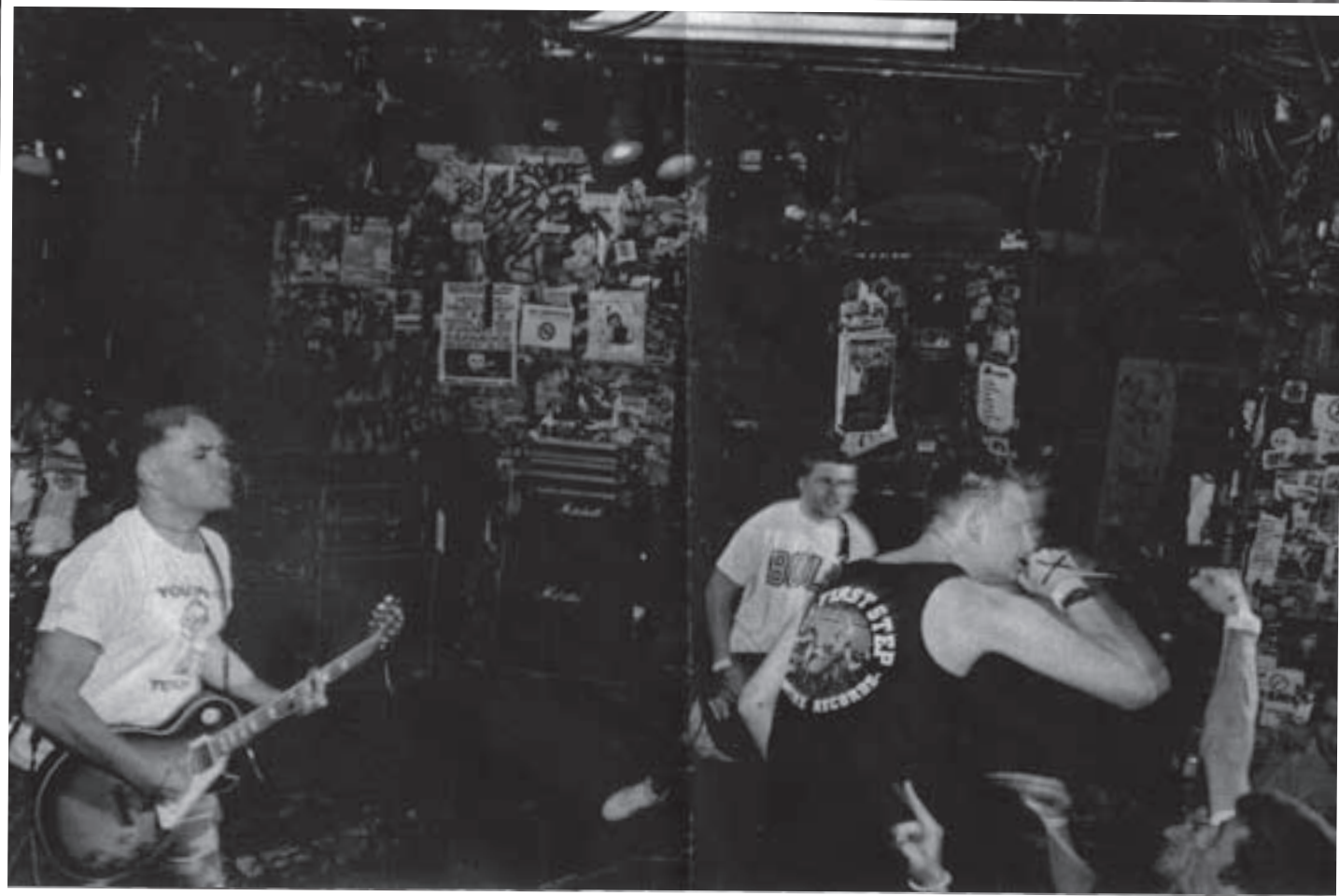


PHOTO: BRIAN FROUSTET



BREAKTHROUGH

PHOTOS: TODD POLLOCK



MINDSET

M A R Y L A N D S T R A I G H T E D G E



- We are MINDSET. We're a five piece straightedge hardcore band from Maryland, USA. My name is Ev and I hold the microphone. Mike and Chad play guitar, Phil plays drums and Chris Bavaria plays bass most of the time. The BIGGEST inspiration for the band is a general aversion towards widely accepted contemporary social norms.

What happened with Anti-Wasteoids? What's the difference between the two bands?

- The Anti-Wasteoids evolved into MINDSET over the last two and a half years. At a certain point we decided we weren't the same band we were when we started. Mike is actually the only original member from the Anti-Wasteoids first demo "Heck Yes!" and after multiple lineup changes and a bit of a shift in our priorities, we decided to make the change. I feel like the name change has played some role in the momentum we've started to gain as a band lately.

Previous bands anyone (besides the Anti-Wasteoids)?

- MINDSET includes ex-members of America's Youth, 3 Over Par, Grand Old Punks, Wednesday Giveaway, State of Emergency, once we were girls..., US Decontrol, Those Who Remain, Bete Noire, Parkview Manor, Thick Like Sorghum, Orange Holiday, and lots of other bands no one has ever heard of.

Tell me a little bit about your first introduction to hardcore, punk and this whole little movement we've got going on here...

- I was exposed to punk and hardcore through my best friend, Mike, who plays guitar for MINDSET. He introduced me to all the other weird kids from our small town when I was around 16 and it all spiraled out of control from there. I always had this feeling of discontent for the way everyone else went about their lives, especially when it came to drinking and drugs. Mike was straightedge, and it was relieving to know that there were other kids out there who felt the same way I did. Our town was super small and the scene was like 25 kids, most of whom were stoner skater kids or weird metal dudes. We were mostly into street punk and DC hardcore type stuff, at least that's what I was into. We went from Minor Threat to Gorilla Biscuits to Chain of Strength to... to this interview.

Your music is quite aggressive for the "youth crew" vibe but with obvious influences from more melodic bands, with some melodic vocal things going and so on. What attracted you to hardcore to begin with? What do you prefer, the all out aggression a'la Minor Threat or the more melodic side a'la Embrace?



- The aggressiveness of hardcore is what I love about it. No frills, no gimmicks, just raw anger and emotion. Hardcore is a vehicle for channeling anger and discontent into something positive: music, art, communication, positive change. Anger as fuel for creation, not destruction. I'm not a huge fan of a passive or escapist approach to hardcore, but at the same time I don't feel like it's worthwhile for myself or anyone else to grab a microphone and complain about how terrible things are without providing some sort of suggestion towards changing the situation. If you're angry, tell me why. If you're not angry... well, you probably should be.

Minor Threat and Embrace are two of my favorite bands, and I appreciate both for what they were. We draw a lot of influence from aggressive bands like Minor Threat and Youth of Today as well as more melodic bands like Embrace, Dag Nasty, Verbal Assault, etc. I would say that for me, and for MINDSET, we're trying to combine the intensity of bands like Minor Threat with the thoughtfulness of bands like Embrace...

What are you angry about?

- How much space do I have? I mean, I wouldn't say I'm a total grumpy asshole; I'm generally a pretty amicable fellow. There's definitely a lot of action taking place on a day to day basis that doesn't sit well with me. Lately I've been able to narrow it all down into one major, all encompassing category, which involves "waste." I feel like there's so much wasted energy in the world, and not just literal wasted energy by carelessly leaving the lights on or not car pooling, but just an overwhelming waste of thought and action. People put so much time and effort into such trivial, backwards, hateful action. People talk too much, people act too little. People take too much, people give too little. It's not like people need to put more time into things, just put the time they're wasting into the right things. Another thing that bothers me on a general level is apathy and thoughtlessness. Christ, this morning I saw a girl drop her used bus pass right next to a trash can. She just dropped it intentionally with no regard for the trashcan less than a foot away. Fuck, dude. How difficult would it have been to throw that away? If everyone had the same mentality as this girl, and just threw their bus passes on the ground we'd be wading through used bus passes. Think of the bus pass as a metaphor. We all too often make exceptions for ourselves, and one bus pass doesn't make that much of a difference in the grand scheme of things, but 6 billion bus passes floating around

is a goddamn crisis.

What I meant by saying that "people probably should be angry" is that if you're going through life totally content, you're inhuman. Ignorance is bliss, reality is a bitch. Genocide exists today, oppression is commonplace, children are starving, hate and ignorance contaminate our world... I'm not saying that we don't have the right to happiness, even in a world of evil, but there has to be something that keeps the fire burning inside you and for me its discontent. Through everything I still see the world as an amazingly beautiful place, but you gotta be blind or just losing your mind if you can't see this world is on fire.

Let's talk about lyrics for a while. You're quite obviously the kind of band that are taking a stand, which is what Effort love about hardcore. What were the first band who's lyrics you really connected with? Any bands/peoples/authors that you feel are worth mentioning (and why?)?

- The first band whose lyrics I really connected with... probably a punk band from my hometown called Corrupted Youth. They were my first real introduction to punk and they started opening me up to different bands and different kinds of music and really different ways of thinking that I really had no idea existed. From there, Minor Threat. Ian Mackaye has been a big influence on me, especially through Embrace and Fugazi. It takes a special dude to be able to say "Fuck You!" with multiple shades of meaning. Embrace lyrics are some of his best, so direct and blunt but at the same time so deep and thoughtful. Four Walls Falling 'Culture Shock' has some of my favorite lyrics; really thoughtful, political stuff that isn't very common in hardcore... or really anywhere. Verbal Assault. Turning Point. Chain of Strength. Trial. The collective work of Stephen St. Germain. Chris from Hostage because he is the best writer around right now. Matt from Reignition because he's really starting to break out of the conventional hardcore box, and he's not afraid to put himself out there. Chuck D from Public Enemy because he's an incredible, unpen-able rhyme animal. Bruce Springsteen's 'The River.' I really appreciate honest lyrics. That kind of desperate, urgent, heart on my sleeve kind of stuff that makes you think and makes you angry and makes you want to burn things and then makes you think twice about it and write a letter to your Congressman.

How do you come up with topics to sing about? Do you discuss topics and/or the lyrics within the band?

- I write about things that are bothering me, issues that I feel

should be addressed, standards that I'm trying to live up to. I try not to call people out; I don't want to be the kind of band that just criticizes other peoples' faults. Everyone has faults, I'm not perfect and neither is anyone else. I feel like I have the opportunity to bring issues to light that people may not otherwise recognize, and I take that very seriously. I don't really discuss the lyrics with the other guys in the band as far as what's actually put on paper, but a lot of times we'll talk about and discuss the ideas I have. I know the other guys really well, they're my best friends, and wouldn't write things they were uncomfortable with, but if I did they wouldn't hesitate to bring it up. I want to represent the ideas of the band as a whole through my lyrics, and I hope that they believe in what I'm saying as much as I do. It's on my shoulders to communicate the ideas of the band.

Is taking a stand and really having something to say as a band important to you?

- Yes. I don't really see the point in being in a band otherwise. I'm not a musician, I'm just a kid lucky enough to be able to speak my mind in a forum where people will occasionally listen to me.

What's the lyrics your most proud of (your own that is)? Even if it's just one line or so...

- I think I'm most proud of the lyrics on the new EP, especially the song 'Words' which deals with the issue of ignorance and bigotry, especially in regards to homophobia. As a band we felt that taking a stand against homophobia, racism and sexism was an important stand to take. It's become so acceptable, in hardcore and beyond, to throw around words like 'faggot' and 'nigger' without giving any thought to the weight that these words carry and the negative effects making bigotry acceptable can have on a society. What's most disturbing is that the people who seem to throw around words like this have taken no consideration to the actual meanings, origins and consequences of the use of such words.

"I don't care who you are or who you know, you only reap what you sow, and the seeds of hate are beginning to grow. Against race, sexual orientation or creed; hate is a virus that continues to breed. We need to open our eyes, open our hearts. Blindness is tearing us apart."

Whether or not you're actually intolerant or afraid of the minorities you belittle with narrow-minded slang, you're still a hate monger if you promote the use of thoughtless speech. If we can't even control the things we say, what can we control? Maybe the song would have been better had I

»if we want to see a fire someone has to light the match«



suggested that people open their eyes and shut their mouths. Empty barrels make the most noise. There's an election coming up pretty soon, which is a lot about taking a stand and from a Euro perspective it really seems to be all "black or white" (no pun intended) with the US elections. A lot of people are throwing words like "change" around them, do you think a Change will come? What's the most important change that needs to be done and what does the word Change means to you? Do you think that hardcore has the power to change people?

- Good pun, by the way. This election is getting pretty ridiculous over here, and I don't think it'll be too long before people are throwing around a lot more than words. I'm pretty confident there is a lesser of two evils this time around, but politicians are still politicians and you can't polish shit. Do I think this country needs a change? Yes. Do I think the rest of the country has the same definition of change that I do? No. Honestly, it's going to take more than a new administration to change things in this country and in the world. I think the biggest problem with this country is how quickly we are to throw faith towards one side or another when we lack so much faith in ourselves. We rely on politicians and the government to make changes in our name while we sit on the couch and wait for things to happen. If you want to see change, be the change. So many people are on a quest for power and control when they can't even control themselves. We need change we can see and touch, change that doesn't require 700 billion dollars and the mobilization of armies. Change starts with individual consciousness, change is individual consciousness. If we want to see a fire, someone has to light the match.

You seem to be into politics (mentioning four walls falling lyrics and so on), do you think the hardcore scene today lacks political ideas and bands?

- I do think there is a lack of political and social awareness in hardcore, but I don't feel that every band needs to express themselves politically. And it's not my place to judge sincerity. I'm going continue to speak my mind and say the things I feel need said, express the ideas that we have as a band, and try and live my life to the standards I've set for myself. I would be happier with hardcore if more bands attempted to expand their world view outside the walls of hardcore shows. That is, without every band eventually preaching the same contrived message to one another.

You're on React Records which is

"the" label at the moment. Were there any other labels interested?

- REACT! Records was the first real label to express any sort of interest in us. We had done a few weekends with The First Step and hung out with Aram a few times and he asked us if we'd be interested in doing a few records with him. We had been huge fans of the label since it first started, just the idea of it, but we never thought we'd get a chance to be a part of it. The fact that he was willing to take a chance on us was pretty awesome, and we're proud to be on REACT! Records.

Did anything change, as far as interest from people booking shows, e-mails etc since you made it official you're doing the record with React?

- Being announced on REACT! Gave us waaaaayyyy more exposure than we ever had on our own. Basically we got instant street cred in a lot of circles and some people started to take notice. We've met a lot of awesome people and had the chance to play with a lot of awesome bands as a result. I think being on REACT! Records made a lot of European kids take notice of us... I mean, I'm positive being associated with the label has encouraged a lot of people to check us out. We never did any European zine interviews before we were on REACT! **What's it been for you so far with React, are they treating you good? You think it helped the band? (or will)?**

- REACT! Records is beyond great. REACT! Is paying for our record and giving us free shirts and all we have to do is write cool songs and say what's on our mind (and pick Aram up from the airport all the time), so that's a pretty awesome relationship. Aram is an incredibly solid dude and a great friend, and has definitely helped us. Whether it's through exposure or just giving good advice, the label has helped this band immensely. I think it goes without saying that Aram Patrick Arslanian is a choice individual.

Do you feel some kind of responsibility towards the label to "turn it up a notch", know what I mean?

- We're only going to release records that we're proud of, and I know that Aram is only going to put out records that he's proud of. I can say at this point we have put a lot of effort into this record and at this point I am incredibly happy with the end result. I know that Aram feels the same way. We feel a responsibility to hardcore and straight edge to "turn it up a notch." REACT! Records is a quality label and we intend to represent that in our music.

Did you put more effort into the song writing than with you previous stuff or did it all come naturally? How does a song get done

for you guys?

- I don't think we necessarily put more effort into songwriting, but I think we've gotten a little better at the process over time. When we stop feeling like we've improved as a band, I think it'll be a good indication to stop. As far as our process, Mike usually comes up with a rough outline for a song and we work on it as a band during practice. We all contribute our own styles and ideas and ideally we come out of a song that gets us all excited. Eventually I'll throw in some lyrics that are either written independently of the music or written after the song is done. We go back and forth between the music and the lyrics to make it all fit, and when we jam out the song and we all start getting live in Chad's garage we know we've got something worthwhile on our hands.

Let's talk about the upcoming record. How many songs will be on it? What are they about? Anything you think we'd be interested in hearing/reading while we're waiting for the record to come out, to get us psyched about it?

- The upcoming record, which we're currently waiting on test presses for and by the time this is printed may be up for pre-order, is called "R E A L P O W E R" and will be four songs of unrelenting straight edge fury. The first song, "Be the Spark" (which you can listen to on our myspace profile) is essentially about direct action and was inspired by a pretty famous quote by Gandhi which goes a little something like "Be the change you wish to see in the world." I wrote this song because I was beginning to become frustrated in the complete lack of motivation in people to fix what they themselves saw as problems in the world. Everyone seems to understand that there are problems in the world, whether it be in a personal or global scale, and everyone is totally open to complaining about these problems, but no one seems to be willing to make sacrifices to eliminate these problems from our lives. I wrote this around the time campaigning began for the 2008 United States Presidential Election began, and I got even more annoyed at the way people throw around such faith in politicians to make changes for them without taking the initiative to change their own lives. The people we need to put our faith in is ourselves. Imagine how beautiful the world could be if everyone took it upon themselves to live peacefully, to give more than they take, to help each other, to mend what's broken, to accept one another and be happy. We may not be able to change the world ourselves, but we have the power to change our own lies, and we have

to start somewhere. We can't sit around and wait for politicians and bureaucracy to make these changes for us. The next song is "Words" which I explained earlier. This song is about thinking before you speak and taking the time to understand one another, about how ridiculous it is to actively oppress people whose actions have no impact on your life, and about taking account of even the smallest actions we take. Again, change yourself and you can change the world. Next comes "Truth" which is from our tape demo "2kGr8." This song was inspired by a specific incident at a show we played a long time ago. I guess in essence it's about how we're totally confident in who we are as a band and as people, and we straight don't give a fuck what anyone else says or thinks about it. We know who we are, and we're not going anywhere. People don't have to listen if they don't want to. Their loss. The closing track is "Before I Sleep" which was inspired by a poem by Robert Frost that I translated into my own life. As a human being, I have certain goals that I'd like to achieve and standards that I intend to live up to, and I feel like I try and set lofty goals and high standards. With this song, I'm admitting that I have flaws and I make mistakes, but I'm still trying to reach these pinnacles. My way of going about it is to take small, tangible steps towards my goal. Always moving forward, and always growing as a person. Some people fail to see these steps as a part of the entire journey and are quick to criticize that these steps are futile and won't make a difference. I know the impact they have, and I'll keep taking small steps towards my goal. All these songs represent different aspects of Real Power. You can listen to the first two songs on our myspace.

What are the plans for MINDSET when the record drops?

- We're going to do a short tour this winter around the east coast and Midwest, and then continue hitting up different cities on long weekends. We'll be doing longer tours this summer, and hopefully one day come to Europe. We're working on an LP to follow the EP, which will be released when it's good and ready.

I also asked Aram about what to ask you guys, he came up with this: Pauly HC?

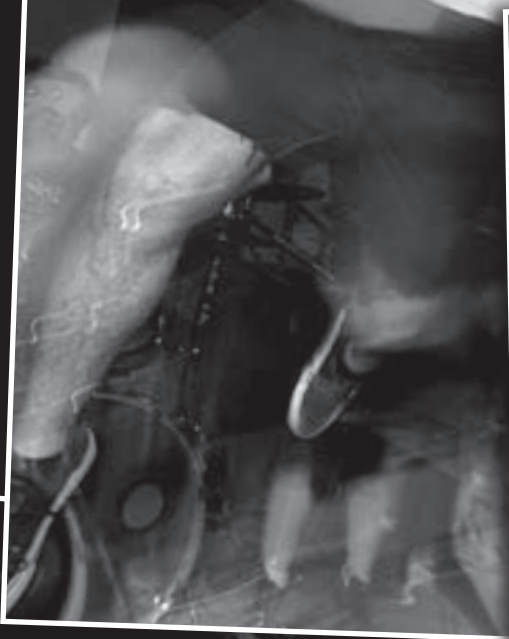
- Solid dude. Giant cats.

Why are there no rules in the pool?

- Rules are for fools, not pools.

Any last words, shout outs or whatever?

- Dude, this has been an awesome interview. You really challenged me with your questions and made me think about things from a different perspective. Thanks for that! Can't just sit back, it's time to REACT!



THE KIDS HAD THEIR SAY



GORILLA BISCUITS

PHOTO: DAVID SINE

Common Cause

The Power To Change
LP
Powered Records
poweredrecords.com

There was a lot of buzz when Daniel from Damage Control got a new band together with dudes from bands such as Shipwrecked in an attempt to play late 80's hardcore again. Youth of today, Abused and Hard Stance were mentioned as inspiration and no one can say they don't hear the obvious influences. The demo however swept a lot of people off their feet with it's "punch-in-the-face" sound and aggressive song writing, and on an early stage it stood clear that this band was in no need of the whole "ex-member of" type hype-bullshit, they managed to deliver the songs to make a name for themselves anyway. With a demo, a 7" and numerous European tours under their belt they went back to the studio for another Powered release.

The new 12" consists of 8 songs, of which 1 ("No life to live") is a re-recording of the demo, that delivers, if not a new way of writing hardcore songs ("No reinventing wheels here..." as Jon A put it in #1), well written, well structured, well played and well produced hardcore. It may have been "done before" but they still add their style and their personality to the songs for sure. The song 'Reality' must be one of the best hardcore songs written in quite some time, especially the breakdown is just perfect. 'Are we so cold, are we not aware? Where's our motivation, our will to care?'- Amazing lyrics, amazing song, amazing album. These 8 songs, single handle, makes me believe that hardcore still has, and I apologize for what I'm about to write, "the power to change". Possible the record of the year. No wait, it IS.

I Don't Wanna Grow Up #1 Fanzine

If there was an award for 'most personal and charismatic zine' Ulrika would probably be hosting her after party right now. Cool-color cover with a picture of the editor herself, although at a much younger age. Besides the interviews (TFS, Common Cause, Justice and True Colors) there's also some content on a more personal level. A little guide to her and Johan (Balance) trip to NYC, some vegan recipes (red cookies!) and a Balance tour diary (off their first European tour). Be on the lookout for #2 which will include a Go For Broke tour diary among many things. All in all, this zine has a very good vibes to it and despite its flaws it's interesting and a good (but quite short) read.

Bona Fide #6 Fanzine

marcus@secondclasskids.com

Between my last zine, Send In The Clones for those who care, and this one you're holding in your hand at the moment I did a free newsletter called Get Involved. It was usually about 4-16 pages zine, copied at my dad's work or at some friends work or at some printer. I tried to just get as much in those pages as possible for kids to read. This is, I guess, based somewhat on the same idea. Instead of waiting for a new issue of the 'fanzine' Bona Fide he (no more 'they') threw what they had together and put it out there. Good idea, the scene need more zines. So, this is 16 pages with a flyer (the zine was released on Edge day so the cover is the flyer for the Swedish Edge day show), the font is Times or something similar, there's only one interview (Have Heart, everyone seem to love this band) and a couple of reviews. The first

thing that struck me was that even though it was only 16 pages (full size, with a layout that gives me impression that it was intended for a more magazine-looking zine) it was far from packed. 1 page with a clip-art heart? A content page? I'd rather have a picture of Time Flies or DYS to fill that void. The interview is well made though, you can really tell he's into the band and he didn't just squeeze in the interview to make the zine thicker (...). If you see this at a show I see no reason not to pick it up but then again, I feel all printed zines deserves your support these days.

Cutting Away Fanzine

The line up for this zine is, once again, not something that will make me throw a party. Half of the line up is really good, the other half I've never heard. A really long and well made interview with Stephen and Aaron (TFS) as well as one with Aram (Betrayed) are keeping this zine interesting enough though. Both the Get The Most interview as well as the One Voice interview are rather short (one page) and there's really nothing in there that gets my attention. Reign Supreme isn't a band I'm very familiar with, I do know that they had an amazingly looking 7" coming out I guess not too long ago. And the U.C. and the Abused shirt worn by them in the pictures are really cool, not sure it's something I'd be into music wise but as with most of the interview they've managed to come up with some interesting questions. If you're into Trial, there's no question: You need to have this zine! I have no idea whether or not Greg is this outspoken and open hearted in all his interviews but it was a good read for sure. Picture quality is above average when it comes to zines





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OUT NOW:

TTR03 - BROKEN DISTANCE - HOURGLASS - 7"

From the south of Portugal, born from the ashes of youth crew heroes Pointing Finger, Broken Distance quickly established a name for themselves with the release of their demo in late 2006. Combine powerful, melodic riffs with passionate, heartfelt lyrics and an energetic presence on stage and you'll find Broken Distance. "Hourglass" is their first EP, destined to make them a name to be remembered.

OUT SOON:

TTR04 - RAT ATTACK - PAINKILLER - MCD / 12" EP

Featuring members and former members of crucial portuguese acts such as Pointing Finger, Devil In Me, Men Eater, Broken Distance or For The Glory, the rats deliver a fresh set of songs packed with raw and intense riffs, critical mosh parts and a pinch of Hard Rock flavour to spice things up. This release is bound to make a dent in the scene.

STILL HOT:

TTR01 - ANOTHER YEAR / DEATH IS NOT GLAMOROUS - SPLIT - 7"

TTR02 - GO FOR BROKE - OPEN YOUR MIND - 7"

TTR03 - BROKEN DISTANCE - HOURGLASS - MCD

CONTACTS:

taketheriskrecords@gmail.com
myspace.com/taketheriskrecs
taketheriskrecords.bigcartel.com

these days but the choice (and size) of font, as well as the choice of justifying the columns, is a no-go in my eyes. Of course, these are just my personal opinion and really, what do I know?

Wake Up And Live #8

Fanzine
narcisos@gmail.com

This is impressive in many ways, first of all it's the 8th (!!) issue. Second of all, he manage to improve without staying away from what he once started with each issue. The line-up alone isn't something that makes my heart beat faster (TFS, Have Heart, Birds of a Feather and more) but it can still be a good read as WUAL is the living proof of. The layout is classic hardcore style without getting boring although there are some fuck-ups here and there such as q's and a's being cut off at the top and, I never thought I would say this in a hardcore/zine forum, the typography some places is just hideous. 'Cute __ __ little __ __ cover.' does not look good. Sorry. Anyway, besides the ordinary interviews he also brings something 'original' to the game each time, this time it's a 'Hardcore touring guide' and of course a bunch of columns. Most definitely the best zine of the issue!

Free Spirit

Demo

I know only three things about this band, except name and so on of course. 1. They're from Boston. 2. Their demo was uploaded on a msg board which later got into some beef that (I think) had nothing to do with the band. I'm not sure though. 3. They seem to love Straight Ahead. It's a bit weird writing a review for a demo I haven't even seen the artwork for, don't even know if a tape or cd-r exists. With that said, I have to say that these 5 songs (the longest being 46 second and the shortest merely 6 seconds) leave me wanting more. Short as hell, fast and hard (no no no, not hard as in what the kids

listen to and call hard-core today) with a really awesome sound for a hard-core demo, well recorded yet not 'too well made'. Does that make any sense? I'd love to get my hands on an actual demo but for now they'll remain fairly unknown in my world. They also remind me of Step Forward but hopefully they'll be more active and actually record some new songs soon.

Feed

Demo
mindxmatter.org

Open up with some acoustic guitars and I have to tell, if you're not Turning Point, chances are I'm too narrow minded for it. Still, I was sent this demo so I figured I'd give it a chance. This is more 'grown-up-hardcore' than Free Spirit, the songs being 4.23 minutes (!!) and 7.05 minutes (!!!) and the beat is never faster than your average Pearl Jam song. Decide for yourself whether that's good or bad. The second song (the 'short' one) has a bit more speed, not in you average hardcore way though, which gives the song more groove and attitude. I'd say this is definitely more on the grunge tip than it is hardcore and I'm sure that if grunge ever gets big again they might be onto something but for now, for me at least, it's quite boring to be honest. And yeah, apparently this band features (ex-) members of bands like Bitter End, Iron Age and some others.

Right Idea

Our World
12"
REACT! Records

What? Straight Ahead reunited and made a new record? Oh, wait, it was a new record by Right Idea. This is REALLY good. Nothing about the lyrics or the music surprise me, but when dealing with this kind of hardcore, that's not a bad thing. I love how the lyrics are super positive ("Never stop reaching for the stars!") and the music is purely influenced by mid-late 80's core, nothing more, nothing less.

REACT! records in full effect. This is a must have!

True Colors

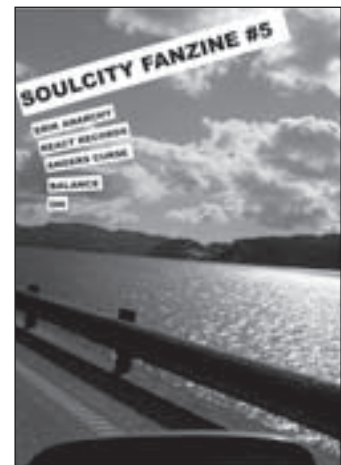
Perspective
7"
Powered records

First off, I can't get into the cover of this record. I love the Boss as much as the next guy, but I don't think they really pulled it off, but since that has nothing to do with how this record sounds, I'll get on to that instead. If you know True Colors, you know what to expect (and if you don't, where have you been the last three-or-so years?). As always, a strong Youth of today and early Turning Point vibe. Some bass lines even get me thinking of Wide Awake. The lyrics are also more well-written than on previous releases. Once again, Powered deliver a good record. Pick it up!

Soulcity #5

Fanzine

Marcus' zines and I go back for almost as long as hardcore and I. Not that that's something spectacular but it shows that this guy got love for all parts of the core. He's been in bands forever, playing different styles of hardcore and I will always think of probably the most enthusiastic guy around when I think of Marcus, and this my friends, you can tell by reading his zine(s). It's not the coolest bands around it's just the bands he's into at the moment. The Tor-Erik interview alone is worth every penny, no matter where you're from I guess and the rest of them (Balance, React and more) are cool as well. Bad things then? Well, the printing could have been better (actually a lot better) and so could the quality of the pictures. All in all this is a quality zine in the sense of content. The interviews are well done and the look may not be exciting but it's welcoming and when it's over you feel amped about hardcore. I'm looking forward to read #6 in less than a year.



TURNING POINT

PHOTO COURTESY OF
JADE TREE RECS.





CHAIN OF STRENGTH

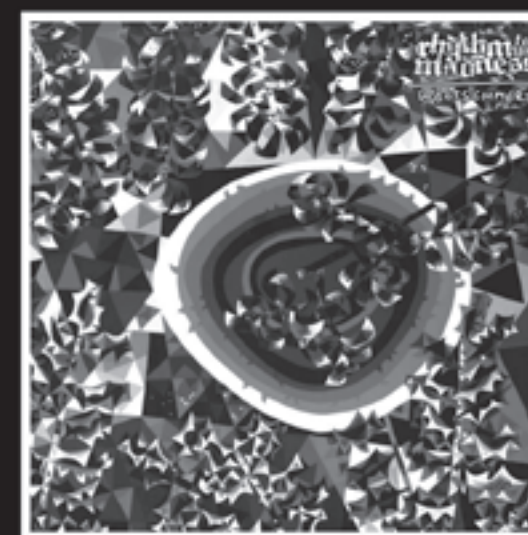
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YOUTH OF TODAY

PICTURE: DAVID SINE

I used to think that label
were just symbol of pride
but over time i've seen
they only serve to divide
it's so easy to judge people
by the way they seem to be
we must overcome this problem to live life peacefully

break down the walls!
yes, we'll break down the walls !

look beyond the fashion or the crowd that they are in
look beyond their riches
or the color of their skin
look beyond appearance and the truth you will find
look for what's inside before you make up your mind

break down the walls!
we'll break down the walls !



Kalle and I are not only good friends and do this fanzine together, we also play in the same band, Go For Broke, in which I play the guitar and Kalle sings. We started out in the spring of 2005 with the intention to play hardcore influenced by late 80's and mid-late 90's bands. Since then we have kept a pretty steady lineup, based on close friends, with Alex on drums and Andreas playing the bass. We used to have Erik on second guitar, but he left in 2007 to go on with his new band, Lions Den. We recorded a demo in the fall of 2005, another demo in February of 2006, a 7" - Open Your Mind, on Take the risk records/Wake up and live fanzine, and a CD - Traditions, on City to City records. We recently recorded three new songs, which are on the 7", that you - if you are lucky, got with this fanzine (it came with the first 50 copies). Go For Broke has never been a full-time band, and never intended to be either, but we do shows every now and then, when we have the time and are excited to do so. So, when we started talking about doing a tour, and not just "yeah, we should tour", but actually planning to go outside of Sweden to play shows and hang out in new cities, new countries for a week, I was really stoked. Unfortunately, Andreas couldn't get time off work, so we got Gustav from Atlas Losing Grip/The Cutting Edge, who actually recorded the Traditions CD, to fill in on bass. Johan, singer of Balance, Ulrika, editor of the I Don't Wanna Grow Up Fanzine and Modde, Social Pressure/Nitad singer, completed the road crew. We had a van, and a bunch of shows. Things were really happening, and I was excited, because even though Balance is a touring machine, I always felt the urge to, at some point, get this band on tour. Mainly because we rarely see each other for more than a couple of hours at a time, and it would be a great chance to spend an extended amount of time with some of my best friends, hanging out in a van or in some city at day, and at a show at night, just having a blast. Before we left, we spent two days in Lund, rehearsing with Gustav - and, yes he learned all the songs in two days, impressive. One of these days we actually picked up the first print run of Effort #1, to bring with us on tour. Besides rehearsing with GFB (or Balance, as I was going on tour with them the day after we got home from the GFB tour) we spent our time eating good, and cheap, falafel, watching movies, and just hanging out, enjoying summer. The night before we left, Modde arrived, and we all

had dinner at Johans place and talked about life, the core and got psyched about going on tour the day after.

First day of tour, we were going to Walsrode, Germany, to play in the backyard of a house, belonging to the family of Balance's long time friend Ikmo. It's bizarre where hardcore can take you sometimes. So far this year, I've played that backyard three times (two times with Balance), and will go there once again in two weeks. This place is tiny, and by that I mean, the smallest place I have ever played, or seen, a show in. Some bands played before us, among others a band called Sirens, that was really good, and they even busted out a Beyond (actually Effort, how great isn't that?) and a Quicksand cover, amazing. We were getting ready to play, and by this point Modde had gotten real drunk, ripped the sleeves off a Bad Brains shirt, about two sizes too big for him, that he got from Alex. One of the sleeves he made two holes in for his eyes, and then put it on, and all of a sudden, he's a drunk Bad Brains superhero - being in Kalles face literally the whole set, in the backyard of a house in a small town in Germany, while the rest of the crowd looked intimidated, yet somehow amused. We got a good nights sleep and got the good news that we could play in Wunstorf, with Ritual two days later, which was welcome, since we'd rather play a show than have a day off, especially this early on. The morning after, we packed the van, and left for Meerane, and this show was a big secret, even for us, since the venue was illegal, and out of respect for the promotor, who by the way deserves all grace in the world, I will not mention his name. Meerane is a small town in the east of Germany, which means that after the Berlin wall was torn down, unemployment rates went through the roof, and the people who lived there left. There is no place to put on shows legally, so this guy busts his ass off to make a living AND he pays rent to illegally run this venue, which is also a youth centre and a place where local bands can rehearse, and he has been moving around from place to place for years trying to keep away from the long arm of the law. This guy is one of the most warm hearted persons I have ever met, and is dedicated to hardcore, in the true meaning of that, often thrown around, cliché. It was overwhelming to hear all the stories he had to tell, and while walking around in the quite dead

city of Meerane, we all tried to
let that sink in for a while.

We found a supermarket that, surprisingly enough was open (EVERYTHING is closed during week-ends in Germany), where we bought some fruit, juice and chocolate soy milk. After a while we headed back to the venue, and the promoter told us he was going to buy us food at a local chinese restaurant that had tofu and vegetables with rice, which was nice. That place was considered pretty expensive, but yet a meal cost about a third to what we're used to paying in Sweden, and yet again it struck us how different things are, not even that far from home.

Back at the venue, we did a quick line check and since we were the only band playing that night, we had plenty of time to goof around on stage, switching instruments, playing Cro-Mags songs and just acting like idiots before the show started. From the room where the stage was, there was a door that lead out to the roof, from which we could see the whole town - quite a view. This was also the place where we hung out most of the night. Kids started to show up, and we noticed that this was not an "average hardcore crowd", this was all the local kids, punks, metalheads and just kids who were bored, looking for a good time. Shows like this are usually really good and interesting, because you get the chance to present something completely new to kids who otherwise may have never heard about hardcore. So we played our set, and kids were pogo dancing, slamming and moshing, just enjoying themselves, which was really cool to see. After we had played all our songs, they still wanted us to play more, so we did, Johan came up on stage and grabbed the mic, Kalle took the bass and Gustav handled the drums (or, at least did an honest attempt to) and we played a Balance song. Kalle didn't know the song - at all, but he pulled off some great jumps that would even have impressed Ryan Hoffman of the almighty Chain. However, Kalle knows one song on the bass - Cro-Mags - Hard Times. So, with the audience still wanting more, we asked Modde to handle the vocals, and so he did. We could probably have played for another hour or so, but - as I stated before - we had rehearsed with Gustav two times before this tour, so we couldn't play any more songs. I left the stage with a smile on my face, and so did the rest of the band.

After the show, Gustav and Modde both got pretty drunk, which re-

sulted in two hilarious situations - Modde falling asleep sitting on the toilet and sleeping like that until the morning after, and Gustav standing on the roof screaming out the few phrases of German that he knew. Few, and very inappropriate. Alex and I slept in the van that night, and I believe we slept better than the other guys sleeping inside the venue, since it was pretty chilly in there.

Sunday - and time to go to Wunstorf. We had been really lucky with the weather so far, and this day was not an exception. It was really warm, which can be a negative thing when you're stuck inside a van with six other guys and a failing air condition. However, the drive was not long at all, and we arrived in good time. The Ritual guys showed up, and so did some kids that had been to the show in Walsrode, which was cool to see. The food this day was not that great, sandwiches with vegetables. I didn't catch much of the opening band, as I was eating, but I do remember that it was getting really hot both inside the venue and outside, and we were longing for a swim.

We played about the same set as the day before - apart from the encores, and some kids seemed to be in to it. No wild reaction, but still a cool show. Ritual played, and kids were into them. The show ended pretty early, and we were stoked to find out that some kids were going to a nearby lake to take a swim. We followed, and it was a really refreshing feeling to get into the water. After that, we decided to go to Stuttgart to walk around a bit and grab some haloumi falafel, which was probably the best falafel I've ever had, too bad I can't remember what the place was called or in which part of town we were. We were pretty soon going back to the van, since we had an over night drive to Prague, Czech Republic. A drive I have little memory of, so I guess I was sleeping for the most part.

We arrived in Prague at 4 AM, so we decided to park the van outside a big mall, to get some sleep. Gustav couldn't find a comfy spot in the van, so he went outside to sleep in the grass, which turned into another humorous event. We saw some security guards walking around in the area, and they were coming up to our van, so we opened the door and yelled and Gustav to wake up, which he did - and directly stood up, still in his sleeping bag, looking like a caterpillar, still drowsy from just waking up, screaming "NO SLEEP, NO SLEEP!" to the guards, that just told him

to go inside the van and sleep there instead. We had a few laughs about that, and then we all pretty much fell asleep. At approximately 9 AM we drove into the centre of the city.

We were stoked to be in Prague, not only because it's a really beautiful city, and the weather was nice, but we had time to hang out with our good friends in Anchor all day. They had played at Fluff Fest the day before and we were going to play a show together that night, and the day after, in Poland. Yet another reason for being stoked this day was that we had announced that it was Chain Day. I guess the pictures will tell you how we celebrated that. However, Anchor had not arrived yet (at this time, I doubt that they even were awake), so we walked around for a bit, found a Starbucks and had breakfast, or coffee at least (Chai tea soy latte for me, 'cause I'm a manly man). After that, we mostly checked out the city, with all the old beautiful buildings, and hung out on a bridge with a spectacular view. Ulrika, Modde and Gustav found a museum of torture, which they of course had to visit. Apparently, there were a bunch of weird devices designed to hurt people in one way or the other, and peoples imagination for hurting others will never cease to surprise me. It's both fascinating and really horrifying. After a quick visit there, we all went to Countrylife, an AWESOME vegan restaurant that had anything we could ask for. Tofu and seitan burgers, fresh salad buffet, vegan pizza and multiple dishes that all looked very appealing. We all had tofu burgers and salad, and that was probably the best meal of the tour. And another cool thing was that since Fluff Fest had taken place nearby, there were a lot of kids that had stayed in Prague to hang out and go to our show the day after. So the restaurant was packed with hardcore kids, and they all seemed very curious about the unusually high percentage of Chain shirts among us. After lunch, we met up with Anchor. We talked a bit about how our respective tours had been, and how they had sold an insane amount of shirts at Fluff. For the rest of the afternoon we just hung out in the city together, before making our way to the venue. The show was taking place in the basement of a bar, and the stage had a big Red Bull back drop, which Alex was really psyched about. We unloaded the van and made our soundcheck. Then it was time for dinner, which was served in the backyard of the

venue. I think it was some kind of salad with rice and tofu. It was really good anyhow, but have in mind that if you're going to share dinner with ten other guys, most of them being vegan, on tour, and the food not being pasta and tomato sauce, chances are the food will run out very quickly - and it did. However, kids were starting to show up and it just felt awesome to be in a completely different country, having a great time, and sharing this whole experience with Anchor, who are great friends of ours, that we see at shows in Sweden all the time. My good friend Victor from Russia was also there, and it's always a pleasure to see him, and we talked about life in general and the Balance 7" recording session, during which he was in the studio most of the time, hanging out and just being a cool guy. I think there was one band playing before us, and it was more metal influenced than what I like, so I can't really say I was that into them, but it's always nice to see local bands in different places than I'm used to. Then it was time for us to play, and this turned out to be the best show of the tour. Kids were going off, singing along and having a good time. And, since it was Chain Day, we played Best of Times - and this show really was the best of times. Anchor were up next, and they were really good, playing both old songs off their 7" and some new ones from the LP, and a Judge cover. They had a really good reaction from the crowd and we all had a great time goofing around and going off for them. After the show, we hung out in the venue for a while before we took our van to the place where we were going to sleep that night. Anchor was going to sleep somewhere else, so we decided a time and place for meeting up the day after and split up. Back at the sleeping place, we put our bags inside and went into the centre of town to grab a falafel. It's great to hang out in a new city with someone who knows it, because you see parts of the town that you'd never see if you went there by yourself. After a pretty long walk we found a place that was open and had pretty decent falafel. We sat down on the sidewalk outside and ate and talked about how good that day had been. When we had finished our meals, we felt pretty tired and headed back to the sleeping place.

We had a good nights sleep and woke up to the smell of newly cooked food. The guy whose apartment we had slept in, had waken up hours before us to go to



the grocery store and had made us scrambled tofu for breakfast. We were beyond thankful for everything he had done, and gave him a shirt and a CD, not that it was enough, by far, but it was what we had. We met up with Anchor and started a long, long drive to Belchatov, Poland. After a couple of hours, we stopped at a beach to take a swim, which was refreshing since the temperature both outside and inside the van was insanely hot. Not much else happened during that long drive. Claes from Anchor went in our van instead of theirs and he seemed pretty happy about a change of crowd for a couple of hours, well, ten to be precise. Cause ten hours later we arrived at the venue, which was a club/bar kinda venue, and it looked really cool. Keeping in mind we had driven all day without a lunch stop, we all were very hungry, but since we had arrived late to the venue, there was no food for us there. Instead the promotor told us that we would get food after the show, which was cool with us. So we bought some bread, juice and peanuts in a store across the street. Time was passing by, but no bands had played, and the cerfew being at 10pm, we started to wonder what was up. At 8pm the first band started playing, and there were six bands on the bill that night - you do the math. We all started getting a little grumpy due to the show running late and the lack of food, but after four bands had played (one of the bands played Bad Religion cover songs with saxophones and trumpets, how about that?) it was time for us to play. I don't remember much of our show, other than Gustav being so bored when playing, he started jokingly kicking towards Johan and walking over to my side and slapping me in the face, and the promotor didn't know that it was all fun and games, so he tried to go in between Johan and Gustav to "break it up". Anchor played after us today as well, and kids were really going off for them, and some of the kids pulled some moves I have never seen before, such as "the boat", where a bunch of kids sat down in a row in front of the band and started to "row" in pace with the music. That was weird but really fun to watch. Of course, Gustav being the jackass he is, he joined them. The level of weirdness found a new level when kids started to lift up members of Anchor during their songs and having them crowd surf - the weirdest part being them lifting up Mattias, their drummer, mid-song, carrying him away, and one of the kids sitting

down behind the drum kit, starting to play something else, leaving the other guys in Anchor with jaws dropped, not being quite sure if they should laugh or be really angry, since that really messed up their whole set. When Anchor were done we loaded our stuff into the van and were excited to finally get a decent meal. The promotor showed us where the food was, and there were - for fifteen people - three plates of french fries and three glasses of water, no joke. Me and Alex got so angry that we just left the room and sat in the van instead, waiting for the others to finish so we could finally leave. There also were a lot of issues with the money for this show, but we solved that, and if I'd get into that again, I'd probably just get angry - but a HUGE thank you to Anchor for being awesome in every way. The Anchor guys were staying there for the night, and we had an over night drive to Berlin, where we were going to hang out for a while before heading home. So we took some crew pics and said our goodbyes. We left, relieved, and still hungry. So we found an open gas station and bought whatever we could fill our stomachs with and headed for Berlin. We arrived in Berlin really early, at 6am or so, and after some not-so-correct driving we found a gas station where we parked our van and got some hours of sleep. We drove into the centre of the city and found a better parking place, and a café where we got sandwiches and freshly squeezed orange juice. After breakfast, we went to CoreTex to buy records, and then we walked around a while before hitting up Yellow Sunshine, a vegetarian/vegan burger restaurant. It tasted as great as always, and Kalle and Johan even bought burgers to go, to have something to eat in the van when driving home. After lunch, me, Kalle, Johan and Alex went sneaker hunting, and checked out Nort, Niketown, Footlocker and Solebox. The others were sleeping in the van - they missed out. Me and Kalle both got a pair of vans eras and then we got back to the van, and started our long drive home. We got back to Lund late that night, and Johan and Ulrika went to bed as soon as we got to Lund. The rest of us drove into town and had a veggie burger and fries, talking about what a good time we had had on tour and how we had to do it again sometime.

Thank you for helping out and being awesome: Gustav, Johan, Ulrika, Modde, ANCHOR, every promotor, everyone who let us stay on their floor and cooked us food.

THE FIRST STEP

BE EXCELLENT TO EACH OTHER
2001 - 2008

Interview conducted on Oct. 4th 2008.
Interview with Stephen by Kalle.
Pictures: Daniel Frankowski, Larry Ransom, Dylan Press,
Brian Froustet, Even Skår and Kate Dance.

.... I'm on my way to visit Aaron, he's in a retreat right now but he's allowed to have visitors until about next weekend so I figured I'd go up and see him. I can probably only see him for about an hour or so and it's a long drive but you know, I'm not gonna see him for three years after this...

You're not gonna see him for three years at all?

- No, not at all...

That has to be... weird?

- Yeah... yeah, it's real serious (Stephen didn't hear me correct).... But after the last show and everything we kind of said our good byes and everything like that but then we just kind of said that... You see, I'm much closer to him in driving time than his parents or his girlfriend so he was just like 'hey man, come over'. So I am.. It'll be cool.

Yeah, but isn't it gonna be weird not to see him for three years after being friends and being in a band together, playing show pretty much every weekend for so long?

- Oh yeah, it's gonna be really weird... I mean, beyond that the shows is not so much the weird thing, it's more me and him talk like every day or every other day and we're the kind of friends who share everything you know? He knows what's going on with me, I know what's going on with him. So that's gonna be really hard but you know, we're both you guys so when he's out of retreat we got plenty of time to catch up, I'm sure we'll be old men together.

Did you know each other this well before the first step?

- Yeah yeah, we played in some bands together before this, we played in Reinforced...

You were in Reinforced?

- Uhm yeah, towards the end I played bass on the LP and the last 7", "one life thug free". I went to every show with them and I was kind of the extra member of the band before that so after they lost their bass player they asked me to learn bass and I did so yeah, I've known him for a long time and before that we knew each other, our sisters were actually friends first and I kind of met him through them. It was cool though, we grew a lot together, through The First Step and everything that came at you in life we both were able to just... Don't get me wrong, we had a lot of tough times, like hard times where we didn't see eye to eye on things but we both are kind of mature enough to sort of accept those kind of things and just sort of grow with each other that way. I definitely count him as my closest friend now.

And when was this, when did you first meet and started to hang out?

- We started hanging out in... -95 I think.

How old were you back then?

- I was about 16 at the time. It's funny though cause when we first started hanging out I kind of started getting into hardcore but Aaron's about two years older than me and he was already way into it and all that, he had band and stuff. He thought I was cool, this young, enthusiastic guy but for some reason after about a few months he got real sour on me and thought I was moving to fast or something, I don't know, cause I was getting into it full force you know so he basically said I was a dork and stuff and ignored me for a good two months or so and that was kind of weird cause it was really good in a way cause I started like... He borrowed me a lot of records and I bought a lot of records before that but I started to just break out on my own and find everything I could and after about two months or something I actually started booking my own show and I came to him and we hadn't talked and I was like 'dude, I want your band to play, you're really sweet' and I think he was the kind of impressed that I hadn't just dropped off the map you know? So yeah, we started hanging out that way. But he's changed a lot as a person. He's an amazing dude but I think like all of us he was just a lot different when he was younger as far as... He had a little bit of a hot head and sometimes we got into pretty nasty arguments when we were younger...

Regarding?

- Uhm... [long pause] I don't know, nothing like real important... Sometime I think, especially when we've been in bands together and stuff like that, it's just a matter of time before he see it one way, I see it another kind of way and sometimes in arguments you're the guy who are kind of guy who is being very rigid and being very much like 'no, this is the way it is' or you're the guy who are being more like 'OK, this is my point but I see your point and I understand it" and you kind of try to work out your differences and sometimes he and I sort of switched off between those different roles and that really worked out real well for us.

Do you still have these arguments?

- I mean, yeah of course, but not so much now but it's part of the growing process I think, we gotta figure out where the two of us, where our short comings are to the point where we can understand that, for example, sometimes when it comes to disagreement my nature is to kind of screw things over and kind of be like a peace make type. But a lot of the times I kind of wouldn't listen to Aaron and be like 'OK man, it'll be cool, we'll work it all out, it'll be alright' and he would be like 'dude, you're not listening to me'. That's

one of the things I did that I had to become aware of. But I think our biggest differences right now is that when we've had disagreements in the last few years we was usually able to solve them in a much more natural way and not take things personally and saying nasty and hurtful things to each other.

Yeah, so basically it's all about growing up.

- Yeah, exactly it's these things that comes with time. And I think me and him also kind of realized the value of having a person there that you've known for so long and it's not someone who you're not going to ditch next week. Both of us realized, we talk about this kind of stuff all the time, how short and precious life really is and yeah, there are things that you might need to take a stand for in certain ways but when it comes downs to taking a stand, arguments and disagreements has a lot to do with your pride and your ego and not so much to do with actually doing the right thing. So a lot of times is wasted worrying about 'your point' and 'my point' and the disagreement and that kind of things and it was kind of like; If this person was in a car accident tomorrow and they were gone would I really care what color the new The First Step record, what colored vinyl it was? You know, would I really care about all this stuff? No, so I shouldn't care now either. I shouldn't allow it to get between us in any way. That's kind of where I think he and I are with things now.

Are you considering going into retreat like Aaron?

- You know, it's definitely something I thought about but I think all of us in certain ways have our own paths that makes sense for us and that we follow and I don't know if I'm destined for retreat. I could do it, and there's definitely parts in me that wants to but parts of me also say that maybe I'm better suited to be doing something else when it comes to spiritual practise or something like that. There's a lot to be said, I mean basically for the next three years Aaron is going to be a monk. He's not going to be a monk for the rest of his life but for three years he will. And there's something to be said, looking at it in a holistic way you need having people coming from a monk point of view and having that knowledge and all that kind of stuff and that's really good but you also need people who are not the monk from that point of view to be able work another way you know? The thing is where I'm more interested in focusing my effort right now is kind of starting a Dharma study group in the town I live in and the area I live in and start fostering stuff that way and neither of



these are better or worse they’re just different. But it’s all kind of with the same goal or aspiration in mind. That’s kind of a long answer but no, right now no, I’m not thinking about doing retreat but at the same time... It’s a very big undertaking and right now I don’t know.

What it all comes down to though, [going into retreat or starting a study group] is being a good person right? I mean you just finished coaching a football team and...

- You mean why I coach football? **Well, I mean, you don’t have any kids or so, and still you take your time to coach football and...**

- Yeah I coach football cause we had the opportunity at the school I work at, they needed a football coach and I said ‘hey, I can give it a try. I know football, I’m not super into football as far as watching and so on but I always played pick-up games and everything with my friends and all that when I was growing up. Basically, in my mind, it’s another way to get to know my kids and kind of affect them in a different aspect. As a teacher you have the ability to influence kids in one way. And as a coach there’s a different level of respect and a different level of involvement. But I’m a teacher and a coach so I’m able to hit both sides. If you’re just a coach, you don’t see the kids every day in the same way. You can help them with develop mental stuff and be a good role model but teachers have a unique opportunity as well. To me it’s just, doing what I can with the time I have to do something good. We won our first game though, this was our first game. It was awesome. It was really cool cause I got this one team on my team, this kid, he’s a sixth grader and he’s beyond fast. He is so fast. We started the game, our defence really shut the other team down and then we got our offense, we do like one passing play for a couple of yards and then we got a running play to this kid, the sixth grader, and he just took off. He must have ran 80 yards, he just absolutely destroyed the other team. He was so excited and so happy, he was just smiling from ear to ear. And that is such a cool thing because that’s something he’s going to remember for the rest of his life. His first touch down.

Ok. So you and Aaron have known each other for quite some time, but how did Izzy get into the picture?

- Izzy is kind of the next generation down from me and Aaron. Aaron was in Reinforced and I was singing for a band called Until Today, we were just doing local shows, none of our bands were ever playing that far away. But we were doing a show in this town that all our parents lived in, it’s the town

we all grew up in, this military town called Fayetteville and we had been doing shows there for a long time and I actually ended up planning this really sweet wreck centre near down town called Honey Check [?] Wreck Centre and they allowed us to do shows, the hall was cheap and we had a really good summer. Battery came through, Envy from Buffalo who I loved, still love came through... Ten Yard Fight were suppose to come through but something happened and they weren’t. Damnation AD came down. I mean these were not huge shows cause North Carolina didn’t and still don’t have an amazing scene but it was a really good summer and a lot of new kids starting coming out and there was some show, I think Stretch Armstrong played, and Izzy came out and he was kind of moshing, kind of slamming and totally new-guy-style [laughter] which we all have done, but it’s just funny you know. And I guess we met him there and just starting hanging out and... When Aaron left for Costa Rica for a semester at college he had been starting to write the first The First Step songs. When he got back he jammed them with Izzy because he was like “with this band, I want us to step outside of our normal crew of friends”. He wanted new blood. I was totally cool with that, so he jammed it with Izzy, and Izzy by that time had been playing drums for a while in band called High Point but he had just gone a lot better and that’s kind of how he entered the picture. He’s just one of these guys ...[laughter] while me and Aaron are very much active dudes in the sense of we like jogging and we like hiking, I surf and Aaron do this and Aaron does that you know Izzy was way into video games, watch movies and hanging out ‘til like, just one a regular week night, ‘til three in the morning. So he was just one of these guys who just literally, he spent so much time listening to music and stuff like that so we could be like ‘hey, can we jam True Till Death on the drums and guitar?’ and he’d be like ‘yeah sure’ and he’d play everything just perfectly cause he just knew it all and practised all the time and stuff at two am or so. So he was very different from me and Aaron which was kind of a cool complement because me and Aaron are not like that. I’ve never been a fan of staying up super, super late, I like waking up early so it was cool.

But who even came up with the initial idea of The First Step, you or Aaron?

- Definitely Aaron, yeah it was more Aaron. He kind of came up with the idea and he presented it to me. Our initial idea was that ‘hey, we are positive dudes and

that’s the way we look at life and we want to sing about how we feel’. At the same time we love hard music. For instance, we all love Madball but we didn’t want to be hard like Madball you know? We love the Boston style a little bit harder like DYS so we thought it’d be so sweet if you can take something like Insted as the foundation. The west coast, really positive, energetic vibe and just add a little DYS or early YOT kind of vibe to it too. That was our initial idea. Aaron started writing songs before he left for a semester abroad and when he got back he jammed them with Izzy and he said to me that ‘I think you should sing for this, it’d be really cool’ and it clicked right away as far as the approach we wanted to take with it cause he was getting more into Buddhism and I was as well and at the same time we were both just really amped on hardcore in general so we thought it’d be great to combine the ideals that we had into just a furious hardcore sound. That was the initial idea behind it all.

Do you remember the first song you wrote?

- Yeah, it was ‘We all die’. Aaron wrote it with Izzy and they played it for me and it was nuts because we all just sat around talking about the lyrics that we wanted to have for it and Aaron brought the idea of facing death and being realistic about death and all that. At first we were like ‘man, that’s such a downer of a topic’ in a way cause at the time there were a lot of bands around talking about suicide and things like that and we didn’t want to be that way but we all agreed that at the same time though that if you approach this in a very realistic but hopeful point of view then that made a lot of sense because basically, that’s why we named the song [we all die], that if we all die then we all need to spend the time that we have, doing something. There’s that real illusion in our culture that, everyone knows they’re going to die, but everyone spends every waken moment pretending it’s not going to happen and it’s this weird thing that we’re all aware of it but we all just stray away from it. So that song was our outline for how we wanted things to be. We didn’t want to run away from what we really felt about things but at the same time we didn’t want to get into something negative, self destructive, cause you can definitely look at something like death and of course get completely bummed out or we can look at like an inspiring sort of fact of life. We choose, with that song and from there on, to look at it that second way.

And at this point, who was your bass player?



- There was this guy, who had played guitar for this band I was in called Until Today and he was this guy called Matt, Matt Himpleton and he was one of these guys that you loved him and you hated him. Well, not really hated him [laughter]. He was this good looking dude, girls loved him, he was athletic, he could run faster than anybody else, he could literally play any musical instrument. He could play drums, he could play bass, he could play guitar and he could sing. On some of the last Reinforced records he does some background vocals that are actually really strong. So he's one of these guys who is a virtuoso when it comes to anything..

So basically it's not hate, it's just jealousy.

- Yeah basically. [laughter] We all loved him but at the same time it was kind of like 'man, that guy is just good at everything'. At the time he was getting a bit more on like an indie rock/emo-esque kind of tip so Aaron wasn't a hundred percent on Matt being in the band. Because we both really wanted to be this furious core, in image and every way. But we also thought it'd be really cool to have someone who was like a really good musician to play bass cause so many times in hardcore, bass is the last thing you think about when really it's like in any good hardcore band like Minor Threat or Bad Brains it's like the bass and drums are what makes that awesome because that rhythmic foundation is just solid and that's what we wanted. So we really were stoked to have him and he probably only played ten shows with us or so and it was cool cause you'd have us in our hoodie sweatshirts and he might be wearing a cardigan and a scarf and in way, yeah it's not as bad-ass as the cover of WNITA were everybody looks like they're on the same page but when I look back I'm really glad that that's the way it was because that's really a lot more 'us'. We get looked at as this typical 'youth crew' band and in many ways in dress and style we are but I can not out stress the fact that we are from North Carolina where you took what you could get and that was really cool and I'm really glad for that so that was definitely who we were. We would always bring random kids on road trips, we had this one friend called Ben who was, and still is, this ultra, ultra crust punk. I mean, he spent a couple of years train hopping across the united states. So that's more of who we actually were, we weren't really this youth of today-clone but we were very much just regular hardcore punk kids but we all really identified with the very simple style of youth crew. Long answer to a short question. [Laughter]

So what happened when you asked Andy to join on bass? Was this because of Matt being "emo" or whatever?

- No no no, when Matt joined the band it was like we knew that he wasn't gonna be there forever. Of course we didn't think of it like that but I think we all knew in the back of our head he wasn't, him too, he didn't want to be in like a "youth crew" band so he went of to school so we got our friend John Millin who used to play in Committed. We played about fifteen or so shows with him on bass and then... It was kind of a little falling out between John and Aaron which has been resolved now, many years ago. But before we went to California the first time in 2001, the summer of 2001 I think, after that John wasn't in the band anymore. And the second time we came out...

Didn't Ed [McKirdy, Hands Tied/Livewire Records] play bass on that tour for some dates?

- Yeah, that's why it happened. We had about five shows but we played three with John and then John and Aaron got in this huge blow out argument, I don't even remember what it was about, and John was like 'hey guys, I don't wanna stay' so he went home so Ed filled in on bass for two shows. And Aaron and John have totally resolved everything a long time ago. But John was in the band in a really cool period though, we played a couple of awesome shows in Massachusetts, that's where we got the picture for the demo 7" that Ed put out, he was actually credited on the demo 7". Cause that was our current line up. So we got back from California and we didn't have a bass player and we started playing with Desperate Measures, maybe I'm leaving a couple of parts out, it's a little fuzzy but basically.... Let me think. Yeah, we had a friend called Jason in college, Jason Solution cause he was in this band called Solution, he was a punk/hardcore kind of kid and he was really cool cause he really went off when we played. He was in the band for a little while, we went to college together and this is actually when we really, I mean we had all been vegetarians before, but we were getting more into wanting everybody in the band to be vegetarian and we wanted to sing about it and stuff. And Jason wasn't a vegetarian, and we had a really honest conversation about it and he said that 'it's not really something I believe in, whole heartedly like you do and I don't think it'd be fair for me to like pretend that I do' and it was hard cause there wasn't really a reason for him not to be in the band except that but he was awesome. I mean we were in college so a lot of kids in hardcore were

coming and going in certain ways. Yeah, so he left and we were getting ready to record 'Open Hearts and Clear Minds' and he recorded on that and at that point we had really been friends with Desperate Measures and played a bunch of shows with them. We actually put on their show for them and we met Andy and Andy was quitting DM, he didn't want to be in the band any more and this guy called John, who's nick name was Vinnie Stigma, was taking Andys place and they were all really good friends so we were 'Hey Andy do you wanna join?' and he said 'hell yeah'. So that's how Andy got in. His first show was the second time we went back to California, we played in Ohai, California and it was a an awesome show, us and Champion did the whole west coast together. It was really cool.

Andy told me he didn't even know the songs at that point, you were playing cover songs that he didn't even know and he was so nervous.

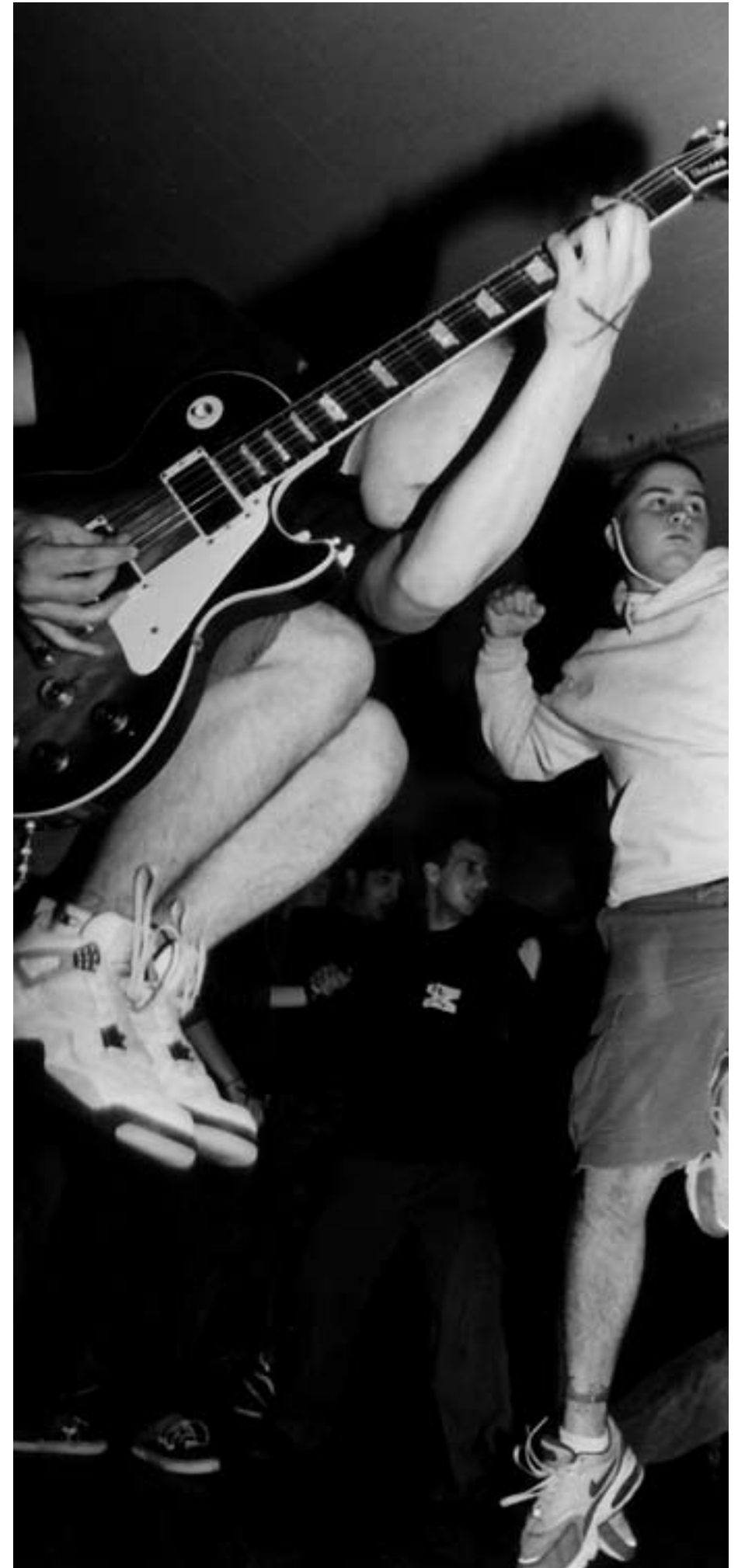
- Yeah, he knew all the original songs but we would always get very stoked before a weekend, and we do this all the time, and we're like 'dude, let's play this [cover song]' and like I said before Aaron, and Izzy especially, can really bust out any song on a moments notice and I always knew the words so it was like we always forgot that there was another guy in the band who may not know the song. We could be like 'hey we gotta open up with flame still burns, we're coming back to Cali, we're back' and Andy would be like 'Uhm, I don't really know it' so we just gave him the notes and told him he could do it. And he totally fucked it up but it was still awesome. But he knew the rest our the songs and he was really good. [Laughter]

Anyway, how long did it take after you started jamming before you recorded the demo?

- Not really that long honestly. I'm trying to think. Aaron probably got back in September so probably in October we started practising and then by..

And this is 2000 right?

- Yeah, and by December of 2000 we recorded it and we put it out by January of 2001. So it really didn't take us that long, we were really psyched and Aaron was just very creative. At the same time, like I said from the beginning we didn't want to do this band like we did with our other bands, so we did things in our own pace and even though we were amped, we tried to not go faster than we had too or if we were going fast with something we made sure that it was because we wanted to do it and not that we were pressured to do it or something like that. So that was kind of how we went about it. So we went into this studio in North Carolina who was run by this guy





called Noel, he had been in a band called Naked Angel and some other bands and he was a bass player so he had a really good idea how to record the bass and everything, which I think you can hear on the demo because it's pretty not 'bassy' as in low-amp but he just knew how to make the bass sound good you know.

While you were recording the demo, did you ever talk about what people would think and how people would react and so on?

- To the demo?

Yeah.

- No, it was actually pretty crazy, like I said, Reinforced had put out some records and demos and we knew some people just from being around, going to shows, playing shows but none of our bands had ever gotten attention. So we really had no idea what people were going to think, it was really cool cause it was a new beginning for us we basically just said 'alright let's go'. And when we had the demo tape, I was in college at the time, and I would literally sit down every couple of days and just mail out like packages and packages of demos. We were like 'OK, we know someone in California, Jimmy Edge or whatever ' yo Jimmy give me your address I'm going to send you some tapes, sell them if you can and if you can't just give them to people'. This one kid in Philadelphia, Zach, really liked it so we sent him packs. Our whole thing was just getting the word out for us and what we were really focused on what was we had to say. Not in an arrogant way at all, but we knew we were good and we knew we had something valuable to get across and we wanted to express ourselves and get the message out so we wanted to do that by any means necessary.

Do you remember the first responses to the demo? Except from friends.

- Yeah, well all our friends loved it of course, most of them were there when we recorded it or when we talked about it. But the first actual outside of our crew to respond was that kid Zach who was in, he had just started a band called Full Contact with Nate who later drummed for American Nightmare and Zach went on to be in Shark Attack and Violent Minds. And their demo came out just after ours, we did a weekend together. He got the demo through Crucial John, who did Breakthrough later, cause they were pen pals and he was stoked on it and he was like 'it sounds like Insted but a little harder' and we were like 'yes!' and he was one of the first kids to talk it up to people from outside our crew. And the thing I remember too is that, he was a dude from Philly and to us, we didn't necessarily look up to Philly but we were southern kids and whether

it's culturally or hardcore wise, the south is viewed as 'lesser' in comparison to the North east, the got the big cities, Philly, Boston, New York and places like that. So to us, it was so crazy that we were getting recognition outside the south cause our bands had never played up there that much, we had played there once or twice but nothing crazy. It was also such a big scene, lots of bands and to us, we didn't have a big scene or lots of bands so to us it was just so cool that someone outside our crew really liked it.

And at this point Youngblood wanted to do a 7", he even did ads for it but what happened with that?

- Yeah, at the time we went out to Cali for the first time. We had met Ed, actually Tim McMahon had heard the demo and he told Ed that 'Hey, you got a label man, you really need to hear these guys, they're awesome!'. And Ed loved it so...

Did you send him a demo or did he pick one up at a show or something?

- Tim? This is actually... I'm trying to think how this all works... Oh yeah, OK. We ended up playing a show with that band Running Like Thieves before they were on Livewire or anything like that. And they guys from Desperate Measures put it on at this place called [something] which was basically the big living room of Gene's house and his parents let him use it, it was out in the wood and it was scary as shit. It was awesome, we went up there and played all the time, we loved it. We played there with RLT and maybe Full Contact too. We did a weekend with them. And Tim came out cause he was a huge fan of Bold and he was stoked to check out Matt's new band. And he heard us for the first time and he got the demo. He told Ed, I guess he got a copy for Ed or something. And then we talked to Ed at posi numbers later that year and he wanted to put out a record with us and he wanted to take us to California later that year so we did. Basically... I'm trying get everything together here, memory wise. [Laughter] So basically, before we went out to California he pressed the demo onto a 7" and we were like 'hell yeah' but with Youngblood, we had known Joe and Sean from going to shows and so on. I think Joe approached me and said 'hey, we really want to do a 7" with you guys' and I said that 'we got this thing with Livewire, but how about our next record we do it with you guys?' and they were like 'sweet'. And we really like YB, they're really nice guys. When we were out in California Ed basically opened his house to us, not in like some kind of 'trying to win us over' type of thing, he was just genuinely being nice. Playing bass

when we needed it, helped us out with food and gas money and all that so at the end of the trip we were like 'hey, we love YB and we love those guys but it just feels like Ed's the kind of guy who we wanna work with because he's just been so supportive of us. Just because he wants to.' So at the end of that trip we told Joe and Sean that 'hey we feel that this is the right thing to do, we feel that Ed has been awesome to us' and we were looking into it in terms of a good move, YB was already an established label and LWR wasn't so it didn't make sense in that way. We just felt that Ed earned it and we really wanted to do it so we felt that it was the right thing to do. Joe and Sean were kind of bummed out about it at first but things are completely cool with us.

Were there any hard feelings at first?

- I always kind of wished that we could've put something out on their label cause they've always been very supportive of us whether we were on their label or not.

OK, so when you got back from California that second time... What happened with Andy?

- What happened with Andy was... [long pause].. There's kind of a back story to this. We had been friends with DM and had a big falling out with them. Whether we both realized it or not or whether it was on our side or on their side there was this ... A little bit of competition. And I don't want to point finger at them, I didn't necessarily ever felt competitive towards DM at all but there was somehow some kind of competition I guess. Aaron wasn't really seeing eye to eye so much with Ryan [DM singer] I wasn't really either, he was getting into stuff that we weren't really into. So we all got into a falling out, I got really angry at him at this one show... It was this big show we played together in Massachusetts and one of their guys came up on stage while we were playing 'the higher taste' and started eating a sausage you know? OK, it's not the biggest deal in the world but it really bothered me and pissed me off because I felt that like 'hey, you guys know us, you are aware that this is something we believe in and take seriously and if you don't that's OK, we've already had these conversations, but if you get up on stage and mock us and we're suppose to be your friends? What the hell is up with that?' I was really, really upset about that. So that kind of stuff festered for a while and we kind of stopped talking to them. And I think... All of that combined caused us to say 'we need to stop the band for a while'. Cause me and Aaron started the band to



have a good time, to hang out with our friends, to play music with our friends, express ourselves... And we were loosing friends so this isn't good. So we basically stopped the band for about three months or so. In that time Andy... I'm trying to remember. Andy's brother passed away and we were a little bit more spread out by that time and, I regretted this for a long time but, I didn't and Aaron didn't, really talk to him about it, we weren't really there for him as we should've been. And I think he was really hurt by that. And we all kind of started talking about how we wanted to play again and we had a better perspective on things, let's start playing. And Andy never have been much into reunion-stuff much so even though we weren't looking at it like a reunion he was like 'hey, look guys, if you guys wanna start a new band or something that's one thing but I don't want to get together again with a band that's broken up' so when we started we thought he didn't want to be in the band so all that combined caused for, unfortunately, a couple of years some real hurt between us and Andy. Of course, we saw it from our point of view as a 'forgive and forget' type situation but Andy was pretty hurt about it for a while. But we sensed in a lot of ways we mended all that we're all a lot better friends now. His band Warpriest actually played our last show. **At this point were you gaining a lot of 'fans' or whatever or was it more after the 7" that things kind of exploded?**

- Uhm yeah kind of... It was one of these things where, we were not a band like it exists today. Bands as big as TFS at that point would literally, nowadays, tour all the time. A touring band you know? We were not like that. We played a lot of weekends and stuff like that but we all had school or jobs so we didn't want to do that nor could we afford to do it. So we got out as much as we could but I think it was more like we had been around for long enough and put out so many records or played so many shows that anyone interested in that kind of hardcore or just hardcore in general had at one point seen TFS or bought a TFS demo or 7" or something. So they all just started coming together. And you know how that goes, if four of your friends say that this band is awesome than you're probably gonna say that 'yeah they're awesome' you know? So it kind of snowballed. But we still weren't like super, super huge at that point, honestly I think that might have been a misconception from our side in Europe cause our European shows have always been awesome but in the US, especially on the east coast, more straight up

hardcore shows are not big. They're not super big. Unless it's some kind of hype like when Mental were around cause that were a bit more that style, they had some hype and their shows were pretty big but it wasn't like... It exploded in a way but it wasn't as enormous like it was in Europe where we played for like 600 people or something like that.

Looking back, do you remember what you felt about the 7" when you got it in your hands?

- I literally thought that I was unbelievable happy about it because I felt that up to that point I felt that it was kind of the fruition of talk and discussion. I still consider every song on that record musically perfect and lyrically... Perfect too. It really captured everything we wanted to capture. And the layout too, the layout was fucking awesome. Three fold and a little bit of silver here and there, too me it was just the perfect for what I wanted.

Yeah I was going to ask you about the layout, cause you said earlier that people thought of you as a youth crew band but in your mind you were just like normal hardcore kids and that whole 'youth crew label' was put upon you by others, but with a 7" looking like that, just by looking at it, of course people are going to say 'this is youth crew'.

- Yeah totally. I guess that's kind of the thing. Don't get me wrong, we were, and are, totally into youth crew and I think visually as far as layout and stuff, all of us have much more identified with the very simple but very hardcore, very state mental look as far as the layout goes or t-shirt and something like that. So visually we're always gonna come across totally as über-youth crew. All I meant by the statement before though, and in general, is that just like with most people we were looked at by people as youth crew but there were parts of us not that way. In terms of, we were basically a band that like because a band had ex-members in it or just because was youth crew we were not necessarily going to like them or anything like that. We had a whole other side to us that I don't think ever came across to people in the degree to what it was. In a very simple way we were always into the early and late DC hardcore as much as we were youth crew hardcore but that's not what came across image-wise for us.

Youth crew is often something that's looked down upon as something shallow...

- Yeah exactly
... **But in reality a lot of these bands had a lot of things to say, and so did TFS. What I'm getting at here is I just wonder if you've always been this outspoken or was**

it more when you got in a band and felt you had to 'speak your mind'?

- Oh no, I think as far as people, especially me and Aaron being the kind of... The continuing members, but especially with Aram, Fred and Greg been in the band we've always been the type of people who, and I don't know why, but the type of people where it's like 'this is what we want to sing about and this is what we want to talk about and we're gonna do it'-kind of. Not like in 'fuck you'-way or 'we hate you so we're gonna do this' more like 'this is how WE feel, and we're gonna express that' which I think is an important delamination sometimes because sometimes lyrically bands who are our contemporaries has been like reactionary. Like, if the American Nightmare stuff's big they're gonna talk shit on suicide-type stuff you know? Or if something else is big, they're gonna talk shit on because it's not what they necessarily agree with. We always, not saying we didn't talk shit or get into those routes from time to time because it's easy when you see something you don't like but we always tried to fallow the path more of acting instead of reacting. Like the song 'What we know' was not a reaction but more a statement of what we think. And if you don't that's OK. But this is what we believe. And instead of being a reaction of people doing this and people doing that. Does that make any sense?

Yeah. Totally.

- That's always how we viewed things.

Which one of your own song, lyrically, do you consider, not necessarily best but most important?
[Long pause] I don't know. It's kind of hard to say. I think it depends on the moment and time. **Go back to the time around the 7", American Nightmare was big and all that.**

- At the time I felt 'the higher taste' was because we really put a lot of thought of how we wanted to sing about vegetarianism because we didn't want to come across with a Earth Crisis type of song where it's 'you eat meat, you're a terrible person and we hate you'. That's not the way we felt. My mom eats meat, my dad eats meat and I don't hate them, they're not horrible people. So at the time that was a very important song to us because, like the line 'animals die, do you know why? We use their flesh to survive' and it's about choices and it's about time and really that's what it came down to. We at this point in our evolution of human kind have a choice whether we eat meat or not. And 99% if the people who would be looking at a TFS record have the choice to buy a hamburger or a veggie burger, or get a steak or get something

»We had a whole other side to us that I don't think ever came across to people in the degree to what it was.«



else instead. So it's about exorcising that choice that's more compassionate. That's very much a different view than any kind of judgemental type vegan or vegetarian song. So at that time that song was very important to us but I think all those songs were so in time and place. One that was really in time and place and that comes [to mind] from time to time is the song 'will it ever end?'. Because that was the time around September 11. Me and Aaron talked about it a whole lot because in the United States people just went to this ultra nationalistic eye-for-an-eye-mentality and we were just like 'man...'. If you look at it like it's a math problem, looked at it like society is trying to solve a math problem never are you gonna be like 'you get me, we get you, you get me, we get you, you get me' that whole thing, doing something to one person and doing it back etc etc never is that going to add up to something good. Never is it going to equal some sort of positive result. It's always gonna come back again and again and again so that song was so much about if you want to actually want to stop violence in your society and violence in yourself you have to be the person to stop. At some point when people are

fighting someone else people have to stop even if you get hurt or worse, you can get killed, at some point though some person have to stop or else it never will. So that was a very important song cause we saw what was going on around us in our community and our country. This real hierarchic sort of violent attitude. There were so many around us saying we should just bomb every Muslim and we should do these horrible things but how is that actually going to solve any problem we have in our society? So that was a really important one, I tend to think about that one a lot. With the war in Iraq now and just the over all mentality of people.

You grew up in a military town you say, were any of your close family in the military?

- Yeah, my family was in the military, Aaron's was, Izzy's was, Matt Himpleton, our first bass player's was in the military. So we all were actually.

So with a song like that, with an anti-war statement, how did your families react and feel about it? [Are or -] Were any of your family in Iraq?

- We have friends who's been sent to Iraq, my step dad was in the first GULF war. None in our immediate family was sent to this war



right now, John, Crucial John was and some other friends but our families... No, they didn't really look down on those type of views because even though we'd probably would call it something different from what they would they kind of understood that mentality and how that the mentality of 'an eye for an eye' really wasn't helpful you know? And my parents are Christians so they often have that 'love thy neighbor' sort of attitude towards things and Aarons parents, well his dad's just this incredible smart military minded type guy who really brought himself up from nothing. So it's like he doesn't have this super hardened views for anything, he's very open to things being different. He's very much opened to new things and understanding things and he kind of sees a bigger picture that I think a lot of people in the military don't. And Izzy's dad didn't really see the image at all, I don't know, I never really heard his dad say anything about that situation towards Izzy at all. All our parents were, I wouldn't say supportive cause they thought our band was like interesting that we did it but they didn't come out to shows and stuff. They never had any kind of negative views towards what we were saying in terms of

that song.

So what about the hardcore scene - how did the hardcore scene in the US react to this anti-war song, cause it seems' from an outsider's perspective that the hardcore scene in the US is a lot more patriotic than what it is in Europe. And I'm just assuming that most of the people (in the us, not the hardcore scene), not judging from what I hear on the news over here, were pro-war at some early stage.

- It's weird cause a lot of people were pro-war when Sept. 11 happened. But I think as time went on a lot of people now are just seeing the following. You have to remember

Yeah, but I'm talking about when the record came out.

- Oh oh, when it came out, no it wasn't really. A hardcore record like ours isn't getting out to people outside the hardcore scene and in the hardcore scene people understood and identified with that theme of violence and that feeling of not perpetuating violence, that's fairly common in hardcore. The thing I always thought didn't know if it came across, a lot of people I don't think necessarily identified to the degree which we meant the song because a lot of time, this is gonna sound really weird I know, but literally to me

as I've evolved and as I've evolved in my youth and everything and even at that time, I wouldn't kill someone to you know, prevent someone else of being killed in 99% of the situation. We would always get into discussions like that with people and people would say 'if your mom was getting killed - would you kill some [to prevent it]?' and even if it was my mother or something and as much as I love my mother and everything, it would literally break my heart. But killing in any form, for whatever reason is never going to bring some kind of positive quality. Of course some will always say 'what if someone would've killed Hitler?' and I understand that one, but it's the mentality that somehow something can justify and absolve violence and killing and really there's plenty of people who are good worthwhile people who have killed for whatever reason but that's also something that anyone who has taken a life would have to live with and deal with for the rest of their lives and whatever religious system you believe in, those are sure things you'd have to answer to at some point. So it's really, in spiritual sense, in a political sense killing is never going to be justified or produce positive actions. Or positive re-

sults. So I think a lot of people took that song on the surface, which is good, we also talked about violence at shows and stuff like that but I don't think people took it for that.

You said that when you wrote 'the higher taste' you didn't want it to come off as a Earth Crisis-in your face-vegan war-type song. But you also said that probably 99% of the kids who will hear that song has a choice, and everyone at a hardcore show (unless it's your first per-haps) know's about animal rights. Can you understand where they're [ExC] are from? You know, 'fuck it why don't you go vegetarian?'

- Oh yeah, don't get me wrong - there's a part of me that makes me very angry sometimes. How can you care so much about yourself, I'll turn this on myself - maybe not when it comes to eating meat cause I don't - but I get mad at myself and mad at other people just at how selfish we can all be. So with that song I felt like, well we felt like, that it was just... The thing with that song and the idea of the song was it had to be something that was inclusive and had compassion as the central focus. And if it was just compassion towards animals, the subject of the song, and not the people who would be listening to it then it would kind of fail. It would serve to build a wall between the vegetarians and non-vegetarians. The compassionate people and the not compassionate people and there's nothing in life that's black and white and we didn't want to do that. We didn't want to create another wall by taking a stance that way. We were 100% committed to our stance and still are, but we didn't want to create that other wall cause that wouldn't have done any good for anybody. And like I said, I completely understand though, the anger and frustration when it comes animal rights and peoples lack of caring about those thing. But focusing on the anger and frustration would not produce something good.

Cool, I totally understand your point, just wanted to hear your thoughts on it. Let's talk about Europe a little bit. The first time you went to Europe, what were your expectations?

- The whole thing was just a huge shock to us, because the whole tour picked up real bad from the start.

Who came up with the idea in the first place of going to Europe?

- It was actually this guy Pete Russo who kind of took over working for Livewire Records. He was like 'I get so many e-mails from Europe and I got so many offers for you guys to go to Europe - why don't you go?' and we were 'whaaaat? what are you talking about man? How are we gonna go to Europe?' and he kind of did all

the leg work and talked to this booking agency called Silverstar and they kind of booked half of it and then all kind of weird shit happened with this Burt at Silverstar. He literally dropped off the face of the map. We later found out that he had claimed his girlfriend or mother were dying and she wasn't. Just all kind of crazy stuff. So that tour got rescued by this other guy that we'd been talking to and he kind fixed it and all that. So it was a crazy experience. We were like 'none of the shows are booked, what if people are like TFS who?' and so on. We were nervous but it was still cool and our first show was at Lintfabriek in Belgium and it was like one of the best shows we've ever played. And you've probably heard this a million times but just the way you guys do it over there is just so different. Better in a lot of ways. The hospitality, the organization of the show even if it's a squat or a punk venue it's gonna have sound system usually, it's gonna have people who care about what they're doing and who are like responsible. I'm sure not every place in Europe are like that but that's really refreshing. It felt like people appreciated us and we appreciated you guys so it was such a cool feeling. The shows, especially were just... Insane. We couldn't believe it. It felt like we had died and gotten re-born in a Youth Of Today - Anthrax scene or something [laughter]. 'What the hell happened, we're TFS' you know, we're not some huge, huge band. It was so cool. So awesome.

Do you remember sitting at the airport on your way to Europe, what were your thought then, what did you talk about? What did you expect, not just about hardcore but about Europe?

- We... To be perfectly honest, cause none of us had at that point ever been to Europe before, we expected to get a lot of shit for being Americans. We really expected people hassling us for political things. We were always guys who knew kind of what was going on but none of us are politically debaters or have any desire to be that way so we were all kind of like 'ah man, is there going to be a clusterfuck at every show and are people going to talk to us about things we don't really know' and all that. Or just holding American citizens responsible for what the American government does. That kind of idea. But it was all so cool because we... We just didn't know what to expect. Of course, just like anywhere you go you have some pre-conception about everywhere. Growing up in America there is the attitude that french people from France are rude, which some of them were. There's the





pre-conception that people from England have bad teeth and are rude, which they weren't and they didn't have bad teeth. So it were all these little stereotypes that our country has...

And all Swedish people are blonde.

- Yeah, all Swedish people are beautiful and have big boobs if you're a woman. And are blonde. So that kind of stuff. I think that the style for the average European is just... very, different from the average style from the average American is. You have a lot of different styles of course but there is kind of just a regular t-shirt and jeans, probably standing from the James Dean motorcycle rock'n'roll sort of thing which is kind of sunk into the American culture. So that's kind of the base level clothes that people wear, and we're very familiar with that. In Europe it didn't seem like that same kind of base level dress. So that was just kind of odd for us to see. Cause we weren't used to it. A lot more... [Laughter] I don't wanna say it. There were a lot of dresses or clothes styles that Europeans wear that we would... Kind of call different things in the US. [Laughter] I mean, the kind of metrosexual look is kind of very big men wearing kind of capri pants, that was always so bizarre to us because men in the US do not wear capri pants ever. Unless they're from Europe honestly. Those kind of little things were just a shock to us. But we thought it was really cool cause it was just cool being in a different place.

[I'm a bit distracted trying to Google 'capri pants' and laughing]

- I hope I didn't offend you saying that?

No, I don't usually wear capri pants so I'm not offended. Sorry, I just got taken off guard there. Let's talk a little bit about the LP. At first when you got back from Europe you did that 'What We Know' tape and it took quite some time to actually record the LP, what was going on during the time after the European tour until the LP was recorded?

- We've always been kind of a band that while we had a place in the scene in a certain way we also got kind of wrestled with our place in the scene. Cause we never felt that in a lot of ways we fit because of the way we viewed things and because of the way others viewed things. We weren't very quick with just aliened ourselves with another group of people and to other bands you know. Not because of our purpose but because we really kind of had to get the heart and soul with a band to really be down with them. Like 'we wanna play with this band all the time and tour with them and stuff' as time went on. There always were, at that time, there was kind

of back and forth 'where do we fit in with this hardcore thing?' and that caused a lot of anxiety with us and frustration sometimes. Things were kind of getting weird with us and LWR and that wasn't good and we were trying to focus on the LP but things just kept popping up that just prevented it from happen. Izzy were having trouble and he couldn't leave Virginia for a while, where he lived. So we had him record the drums in one place and we did everything else somewhere else and we also at that point had Greg Bacon playing in the band and he would play when we played on the west coast and he played on the LP and then another friend, Chris, played for us when Greg couldn't play for us. So we didn't have a solid line up in a weird way even though we had two good friends who played bass. So everything about it seemed weird. And I gotta say, Aaron always had this ... He's a wicked unique person as we all are, but his views towards hardcore, life and the band and everything is really his owns in a lot of ways and sometimes he really had a hard time reconciling where TFS was and where he felt it should be. And not in popularity or anything like that but sometimes he felt we moved to slow and other times he felt we were like a machine and just moved to fast without thinking. He always thought about that a whole lot and I think it bugged him out at times. And he was changing a lot and things around us were changing a lot and things with Izzy were changing and I think all of this took it toll. And then things with LWR started to change, it just made it so tough to get the actual layout finished and get the record put out. **Did the recording take time as well, since you recorded with Walter and so on?**

- Yeah, the initial recording did but then there was a lot of going back and fixing vocals and so on. And none of us lived in New York City so we always had to go up there which was tough cause I would have something going on one weekend and Aaron would have something the next weekend and it was just hard getting in there actually doing it. But the recording process, besides some bumps on the road, was really fun. Working with Walter was awesome.

Who even came up with the idea of working with Walter?

- That, again, was Pete Russo at Livewire Records. He had been in contact with this guy Joe Nelson, who was the first singer of Ignite and the singer for The Killing Flame and I guess Joe is a good friend of Walters and at some point he mentioned that Walter wanted to produce another hardcore record and Pete Russo was like

'let me send you some TFS stuff and let's see what he thinks' and Joe gave it to Walter and he was like 'dude, this is fucking awesome, I'd love to work with these guys, it'd be so sweet'. It was actually Pete Russo who came up with the idea and got the ball rolling. **What was your reaction when you heard that Walter thought your stuff was amazing?**

- Oh dude, I was so pumped. Because, I mean he's the guy in every way I appreciated his vision more so than I appreciated 99% of all the other hardcore guys for his school of dudes. Because here's the guy who wrote some of the best hardcore records of all time but then he also did some of the best non-hardcore records of all time. I mean, he played in Rival Schools which I love, he played in Quicksand which I love and the Moon-dog stuff. The guy is hardcore in every way but he's not confined by it. And that was the coolest thing when we started hanging out with him. He didn't dress like a hardcore kid, at one point he'd show up to the studio in a track suit. But everything about Walter... Like 'dude, what about the Negative Approach 7"?' he went off one day for about 50 minutes about how much he loved the NA 7" and we were jamming out songs and he would just grab a guitar and he'd play, I think it was B'last's 'it's in my blood', he'd just played the first five songs just out of his memory. That was just so refreshing, and kind of inspired us. We were like 'that's the kind of dude I want to be more like'. I wanna be a guy who's hardcore without a doubt, who can appreciate it and can get down with that at any point in my life but he's so not confined by it. There are so many people who are his peers and they're holding on to what they were whereas Walter is still defining what he is, he's constantly improving and re-inventing himself and that's really awesome, that's what's so refreshing about him. So yeah, I was beyond stoked when I heard Walter was doing it. I didn't know what to think. To be honest I knew what he did and the bands he were in and so but I didn't know much about how supposedly he was like as a person or anything. So it was just really sweet meeting him and he's such an outgoing person and cool guy so it was easy to get down with him right away.

It seems Pete Russo did quite a lot for you guys, but wasn't there a falling out with Pete as well?

- Yeah, we did have a falling out with Pete. It was kind of about the time... He basically took over and ran LWR. While Ed still owned the label Pete did everything and he didn't get the appreciation from Ed that he really deserved which, and Ed and him has since



»Here's the guy who wrote some of the best hardcore records of all time but then he also did some of the best non-hardcore records of all time.«

reconciled everything, but I think that was really hard for Pete and we basically were the main thing holding him to the label so when we were going to split he got really upset and bitter about that. At the same time he was changing a lot as a person too, he was moving to New York City because he's really into art and he works in the art world and so. He was evolving as a person too. He and Aaron had been roommates for a long time, for a couple of years and they kind of had a falling out which kind of translated into us having a falling out unfortunately. It's really cool though because in the last two years or so we've gotten really back in touch with him and he came to Europe with us the last time and me and him hang out fairly regularly. He's such a great dude. There was a period though, and it's one of those things that when I look back I regret with TFS. Pete Russo probably did more for us than any single person and it's such a tragedy that he never got the credit for the LP that he probably deserved. He basically designed all the stuff for it and that was going to be his big thing and we had the falling out and he ended up not designing it. That was always something that always bothered me. But for our last record 'Connections' he designed

that.
So, I know you've been asked this question many time but what really happened with you changing label?
- We really were not seeing eye to eye with Ed. It was about how he was handling the label. We felt that things had really changed in that way. It wasn't where we needed to be and like I said, we weren't really seeing eye to eye with him on... everything. It felt like there were so many things that weren't working at the point and then Kyle were just basically a guy we'd been friends with for a long time, we met him the first time we were out in California and he was basically like 'yeah I have a label now, I would love to help you guys out I've always wanted to put out a TFS record'. So we talked to him and we went for it.
What did he do different from Ed as far as handling the label?
- The thing is we've never been a band that are concerned about money. At the same time we're just normal people, we don't like the feeling of being in debt to people. We don't like that feeling of owing people money. There was this weird thing with Ed where the books with him, the records of what we owed and what we had paid, were never really straight. All of the sudden he could tell us we owed him this



much money and we were like 'how could that be?' and this and that... And it was never straight. And that was just really crappy. Kyle on the other hand was really straight forward with that, very up front with it and very easy to talk with about that kind of stuff. But also he just brought a whole new fresh perspective to the band. We basically felt that it was a new beginning for us.
At what point in the career of TFS did you consider yourself the most sought after band as far as popularity?
- In terms of people coming out to shows, when the LP came out no doubt. We had decent shows on the east coast and then we'd go out to the west coast and it'd be really awesome. Gilman Str. and southern California and that's when we felt that it was something special, it was really cool. At the same time, to a certain degree, it was kind of weird for us too. Maybe it's not humble to say you're humble but we're pretty humble simple guys so I didn't know what to say when people told me that 'dude, your band has changed me' or 'you've made such an impact on my life, I love your band'. I was always very appreciative but I never knew how to handle it. It was so bizarre. You start out as a small

band from North Carolina and then people you've never heard of or met in your entire life are talking about how great you are. That's just... It's a little bit of a shock. I think towards the end there with the LP and until the end of the band it was just on the rise as far as popularity. I think that if we'd become a touring band to the point of like Champion and bands like that I think, in terms of popularity, we could've been even bigger but it's not something we ever had any interest in doing.
But the 7" most have sold a lot though right? And switching to a bigger label backing the LP you must have known what was coming right?
- That's really our first official LP, and though everyone always told us that once we release an LP every band gain popularity in some way. Because LPs are easier for label to get into stores so people who never could've heard the band before now can. So yeah, to a certain extend we expected it. I guess we never quite knew how it would catch on. Honestly, even to our last show I never could call a TFS show. I was always nervous before 'is anyone really gonna care, I don't know.. What's it gonna be like'. Even at that point. We figured that, yeah there will probably get a little

better but not much, who knows. That was kind of our attitude towards things.
You guys were always wanted everywhere, on myspace there would always be comments like 'hey come play [wherever]'. How did you deal with that and keeping your feet on the ground?
- Especially towards the last year or so that kind of stuff really starting to annoy all of us a bit. Especially Aaron. There's this famous, within the band, there's this famous thing that Aaron does... This kid came up to him right after, literally right after, we had played. I think it was Germany, in Stuttgart or something it was an awesome, awesome show and this kid came up to Aaron and was like 'you guys gotta come back here'. And Aaron, not in a mean way or anything, was like 'dude! We're here right now. We couldn't get any more here than right now' and the guy didn't know what to say and it was so awesome, because it was so true. 'Why are you worried about when we come back, we're here right now?' [Laughter] I think it was a little bit our mentality lately 'let's appreciate what we have right now and not always have the next big plan, the next big tour, the next big this planned on the road.
But in all fairness though, that



kid in Germany, that could just be a language barrier though you know? Just his excitement...

- Oh yeah, totally. And I can identify with that kid and that feeling. If you like a band, you're stoked and you want them to come back and that show was awesome but it was just hard to deal with. We kind of got tired of that in a sense. Aaron's a good guy for one liners in the band. At one time he was getting kind of pissed about it, he was like 'I'm not a doctor, I don't make house calls' [Laughter] we can't go everywhere, we can't do everything but everybody wants us to. So I think in a way we just dealt with it we sort of shrugged it off 'that's just people being people' but it was always kind of hard. We didn't like or don't like disappointing kids either, that was never a good feeling. If a kid asked us to come to Malaysia, and it's like we want to go to Malaysia to help out, to make that kid stoked but it's like... are we ever going to go to Malaysia? I don't know. That would be really hard for us.

What's the one place you really regret you didn't go to?

- I really wanted to go to South America and we had plans to go..

Didn't you go there? Or that was just Guatemala?

- Yeah we went to Guatemala but we had plans to go to Chile, Brazil, Argentina and maybe even Peru.

Were these just ideas or were there actual plans of going?

- No no no, there was actually plans to do it, we even had a week picked out to do it. And then I guess 108 just confirmed their tour to go the same week and we were just kinda of like ooaaahh.... That's no good, we didn't want to go with 108 or anything like that. After that it was getting close to when things were getting busy for Aaron preparing going into retreat. It's one of those things were you want to squeeze everything you can into a given period of time but you kind of know that you can do it all but you're probably not going to enjoy it that much because it's going to be so stressful you're not actually going to have a moment to sit down at home and be like 'wow, that was really cool, I can't wait for the next thing'. You wouldn't have time to even think about that cause you'd spend a couple of days at home and then go do the next thing. So we basically decided that we couldn't do it. We weren't going to be able to do it before we did the last show. To me that would've been the shit because playing in Guatemala really opened our eyes to the fact to... The way North Carolina was in comparison to the north east is the way Guatemala are to the rest of North

America, everyone look to North America for hardcore. For me, and I think for all of us, we found such a good vibe and a better attitude and mentality in Guatemala. And we wanted to play in that area of the world more. Kids really, and I'm sure you can appreciate it too although I know your area has a good scene but it's not like shows come every single day, and when things aren't happening every day you start to appreciate it more and down there hardly any bands from the US or anywhere else in the world has come to those areas. So they're beyond excited and it's a very cool thing to share with the people there. As much as they're glad that we came to Guatemala it was so cool to share that experience with the people in Guatemala.

So even though it's not an official break up of the band, do you think 'Connections' is a worthy fare well record for TFS? Like 'Disengage' was for YOT.

- Honestly it wasn't planned to be our last record, we've got about five songs that we recorded drums and guitar to and started to mix but we hadn't put down bass or vocals yet. But we had the tracks for, and it was going to be probably the last thing we did but we just ran out of time and we didn't have the ability to really getting together and doing it. So we weren't really looking at 'Connections' as our last record. But I'm so happy with it and so proud of it because to me, and I think the rest of the guys, it's a real representation of where we were at that moment in time and what we had kind of evolved to as dudes. It very much has a lot of the same intensity and intention as in the beginning of the band but at the same time though it's not as the beginning of the band or as the LP because we weren't the same people. So it kind of reflects who we are and who we are in the process of who we're becoming in a weird way. And that really makes me proud because, we didn't want to write another LP worth of songs that sounded like 'What We Know' because we love 'What We Know' but we already did that but at the same time we didn't want to write an indie rock record so to us that was the perfect sort of mix between it all. Kind of how 'Disengage' or maybe 'Face Tomorrow' by Mouthpiece showed off a little bit more of what the band liked as oppose to just one sound. I think that's really there on that last 7".

Do you remember your personal anticipation for the last 7" and how it was different, if it was, for the first 7"?

- When that first 7" came out, there was a certain energy in the air, such a feeling of 'I can't wait for people to hear these

songs' and we were kind of on a mission in one sense, not in any weird way or so but we were focused on what we wanted to do and with 'Connection' coming out it was such a different feeling with it. We'd just come through so much as a band and had a new line up that literally, in my opinion, the best and most complete we ever had as a band, so it was such a feeling of solidarity that it was almost like back to the demo feeling. 'If nobody likes this, we don't fucking care' cause we loved it. We feel connection. We'd sit around and talk about that song and we feel that song, we understand what we be with that song and we understand what it's about. That's such a cool feeling, to feel you're all on the same page in the band. That to us felt like such a triumph that we really didn't care whether anybody liked it or not. With OHACM, like I said, we were so much younger and so enthusiastic about it and we didn't care what people thought but at the same time we wanted people to get so stoked because of it. Whereas with 'Connections' we knew things that the things we were saying we really believed and wanted people to hear but at the same time we just needed to say it no matter if people enjoyed it or not. Does that make sense?

I think we've covered pretty much everything I wanted to talk about.

- Whatever you got, just ask it man, I'm cool with it.

I actually don't have any more questions written down. You think there's anything I've missed out on?

[Long pause]

When you think of TFS what's the first thing that comes to mind?

- I think the first thing that comes to mind more so than any show or anything was that time we all spent together, whatever line up it was or whatever roadies were in the van, those moments where you felt like as you were a part of something and not something big and popular but you felt like you were a part of something idealistic and something that were going to make change. The people we talked to, even if it was just the guys in the band, we could feel people growing. The conversations we've had, the phone calls we've had between band members, that to me is that feeling of growth and openness. Being out as a teacher and working in the non-hardcore side of the world that's one of the hardest thing to reconcile, the fact that so many people in so many situations are just closed off and very hard. And it's not their faults, it's not like they're bad for doing and I know that I'm like that sometimes but I think that's the thing I appreciate most with TFS is that there's such a

sense of openness. You're like a plant getting sunlight, the more light and the more energy you get the more you grow and the more you develop and the stronger you get. It's kind of the way things felt with us. The older we became the stronger and better the band became and as individuals and everything. So that's kind of the first thing I think about.

And how do you want TFS to be remembered?

- I kind of don't in a sense. I just want the cards that were TFS sort of fall where the may. Honestly, my hope would be that in five years we decide to play another show I'd rather have five people there because all the people who were there at our last show are off to busy doing worthwhile good things in their lives and they just can't make it. But I would rather know that ten of my friends who I saw at the last show have become fathers or mothers and are at home taking care of their kid and raising this really wonderful individual in such a good way and that they can't get away to come to our show. To me that would be the best legacy because hardcore's awesome and hardcore's what got me to the point where I am now in so many ways but there's also so much outside of hardcore that needs attention. If there's a state in the hardcore scene and people remembered our music and nothing's changed outside of that then it's like... It really falls short. I would want us to be remembered by the people who were around us and the things they do, I wouldn't really care if people remembered me or Aaron and the other guys. I want them to remember all the friends that we had around us and the stuff they do. That's kind of what I would want. I don't know what the future hold.

I think that's a pretty good way to end this interview.

- If you have any more questions just let me know and we'll talk again. These were awesome questions and I feel they fall the course of the band which is really nice. I'm sorry I talked so much.

Any last words?

- I just want to say thanks to you cause you've always been very supportive. I remember actually being at Pete Russo's house and getting the Send In The Clones Fanzine in the mail and that was really sweet. And I know from that moment we always, whether we had actually met in person or not, we had a cool connection with you. And I really appreciated your perspective and your interest in the band. We all really did. Thank you, this interview has been awesome.

Thanks man. Tell Aaron I said hi.

- Will do man, have a great night.



Crucial John

At the turn of the century it was a depressing time and in the same regard an exciting time in North Carolina. Everything was changing, people were leaving, bands were breaking up and it seemed like everything was winding down. Getting into hardcore in the late 90's while living in Fayetteville, NC...I loved going to see Reinforce, Until Today, and High Pointe, but when The First Step started...it was like they had taken the very best pieces of the previous generations bands and formed this super unit that was going to take things into the next generation. At that time we were capturing again the feeling of tremendous excitement and everyone was full of energy and passion again.

I remember before the band had even started before Aaron had even went to Costa Rica, him playing the main riff to "We all die" to me over the phone and being stoked out of my mind because it had a heavy Insted vibe. And then after a few practices I remember Steve stopping by my ex-girlfriends house one night with a practice tape of 3 songs to play for me. There were no vocals at that point but he was explaining how the vocal patterns were going to fall into place. "Dude! right here...along with the breaks...THE! FIRST STEP!... it's going to be so cool!" Making a dub of that tape and playing it to shreds for the next few months. I remember playing bass for them at the first show in the Outer banks of North Carolina and afterwards all of us realizing that I just wasn't going to cut it. I remember hanging out with Aaron at his parents place and coming up with the chorus to "Something Inside" together. I remember starting Breakthrough with Izz at the tail end of 2003 and The First Step giving us the opportunity to play all over the US with them and with Insted at CBGB's and numerous times in Europe. I re-

member laying down in my tent at night in Iraq listening to an advance copy of the "What We Know" LP being so into it and just imaging how much kids were going to love this record. And then the mayhem that was going to ensue after I got back home and the record was released. I remember the last show and how fun it was and how nice it was to watch how far they had come from the humble beginnings all of those years before. I think it was a good time for them to call it quits. Only a few bands in the history of music were able to pull off sticking around through decades and remaining relevant. Especially with a genre like punk and hardcore, I think it's best for a band to whip it together and hit it hard for a few years and then step away and inspire the next group to step up and do the same. A nice recycling of energy and creativity.

It's funny to look back and think how the best straight edge hardcore band of the decade came from the exact same town where I was living, in a smaller southern city where things are usually really sparse. And we spent a great deal of those early years yearning for and looking up to the bigger cities, and then realizing, fuck man!...we had it all right where we were at! Before Breakthrough played a short set in Germany on the 2005 TFS European tour, I grumbled into the mic "Were going to play a few songs and then The First Step is going to get up here and change your life". And for me....that was 100% absolutely true. The First Step will always be my favorite hardcore band. They are done and left me with memories and experiences that will shape my future. It's fun to reflect and look back on all the great moments and tough times but I'm way more interested and excited for whats next. Forever forward....

Walter Schreifels

Working with TFS was a blast. I hadn't kept up with SExHC but TFS embodied the finest qualities of the music and the movement, community minded, dedication and heartfelt. For me the song "What We Know" was an instant classic. They reminded me of how much I still love HC and what it stands for. The fact that they were stringing together their tours, recordings and rehearsals from four different states showed how dedicated they were and how much they enjoyed doing what they do. That excitement is contagious, which is the key to their success. I'm sad that they aren't making new records but I'd be surprised if they don't resurface in one form or another. In the meantime they have left behind some inspirational music that I believe will continue on with or without them.

»Are we all mute, can't we
speak and express the ideas
we really think? I want your
voice out of my head; I can't
believe the words you said.
All this great music with no
message, what is the point?«

-As it is

Dylan Press

It's pretty interesting to be able to look back to a certain date, and recognize that was the starting point for so many changes in my life. Prior to THE FIRST STEP, I can't recall another band that I put so much effort into seeing.

Weekend after weekend myself, Fred and our friend Ashley would drive hundreds of miles to see them play. Through rain storms and snow storms, usually getting back home only hours before we where suppose to be at work. At some point I took it upon myself to start promoting their upcoming shows on every hardcore message board I could find.

When you hear or see a great band for the first time, after words you go out of your way to tell all your friends about them. I guess I took it a step further and felt like everyone should know about them.

The feelings I felt and the things I thought about on a daily basis where exactly what they where writing about. That connection paved the way for our friendship.

I'm very fortunate to have been invited on many of their tours. This gave me the opportunity to travel to places I'd never been, but more importantly meeting and developing new friendships with people in these different scenes around the world.

That will never be matched.

What I'll miss the most is being in the van with those five guys. The exchange of ideas and feelings expressed in those long road conversations, I'd have to say that's where I learned the most about myself and life.





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